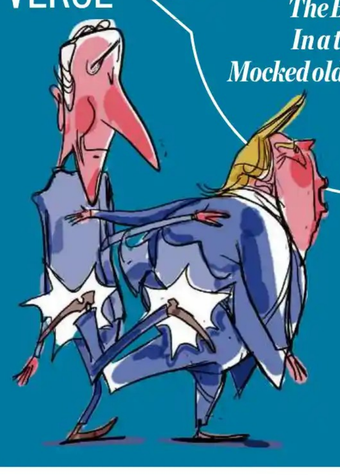
DH on Saturday

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

WHACKY VERSE



Oh Blimey!

Trump, emperor of snarls
Played host to King Charles.
The British royal
In a tone jovial—
Mocked old Donald's morals.

SC grants pre-arrest bail to Khera in Assam case

P9

A voice for women folk singers

When hip-hop artiste Krantinaari was told there was no audience for women in her chosen genre, she began to wonder about the plight of women musicians in rural India. This sparked a journey across the country to document their work. A writer speaks with Krantinaari about her findings.

The SATURDAY STORY

Full story, Page 13

Commercial LPG (per 19-kg cylinder) Old price ₹2,078.50 | New price **₹3,071.50** | Increase **₹993**

5-kg FTL LPG (per cylinder) Old price ₹549 | New price **₹810.50** | Increase **₹261.50**

Bulk diesel (per litre) Old price ₹137 | New price **₹149**

ATF-International (per kilolitre): Old price: $1,435.31 New price: **$1,511.86** Increase: **$76.55**

Commercial, mini LPG prices hiked by Rs 993 and Rs 261

Steepest price hike so far; move comes after polling in four states, Puducherry

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder was hiked by Rs 993, and the 5-kg mini cylinders, widely used by the labourers and street vendors, by Rs 261, with effect from Friday, just a couple of days after the completion of assembly elections in four states and Puducherry.

The commercial LPG cylinder now costs Rs 3,071.50 in Delhi, Rs 3,046.50 in Mumbai and Rs 3,174.50 in Bengaluru, as per data released by Indian Oil Corporation. The price varies due to state taxes.

This is the steepest single increase in LPG cylinder prices so far.

The price of THE commercial LPG cylinders has been raised three times since the beginning of the West Asia war on February 28.

It was raised by Rs 114.50 per cylinder on March 1 and by Rs 195.50 per cylinder on April 1. The cumulative increase in a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder in the past two months stands at Rs 1,300.

The price rise will directly impact the restaurants, hotels, bakeries and other businesses that rely heavily on commercial LPG.

It may lead to a jump in prices of food and other items as businesses are likely to fully or partially pass the costs on to the consumers.

The price of the 5-kg Free Trade LPG (FTL) cylinder, commonly referred to as the 'Chotu' or mini cylinder, has been increased by Rs 261 per cylinder.

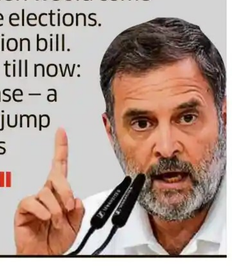
However, the price of domestic LPG, used by households, has been left unchanged. The price of petrol, diesel and Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) for domestic use also remains unchanged.

The latest revision comes amid volatility in crude oil and gas prices in the global markets amid tensions in West Asia.

Brent crude price surged to a high of $126 per barrel on Friday.

▸ **LPG prices, Page 4**

> I had said it – the heat of inflation would come after the elections. This is the election bill. From February till now: Rs 1,380 increase – a whopping 81% jump in just 3 months
>
> **RAHUL GANDHI**
> Congress leader



City hotels to hike prices

ASHWIN B M & AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

As the prices of commercial gas cylinders were hiked on Wednesday, the hoteliers in Bengaluru are gearing up to increase the prices of food items.

Customers can expect a general increase of 10% to 15% across the menu, with coffee and tea expected to rise by Rs 2 to 5 (reaching prices of Rs 20 or more), while breakfast items like idli, vada, and dosa, as well as various rice items, are likely to see a hike of Rs 5 to Rs 15 per plate. Larger meals may see an increase of Rs 25 to Rs 30, as small and medium-sized hotels struggle to absorb the high input costs and the 18% GST on commercial cylinders.

Speaking to *DH*, PC Rao, President of the Bengaluru Hoteliers' Association, said that a price hike in food items is inevitable. "Hoteliers cannot run businesses after paying so much to procure cylinders. We urge the Central government to reduce the prices," he said.

▸ **Hotels, Page 4**

78% rise in CS admissions in 5 years: Panel flags 'crisis'

Big drop in mech, civil & electronics admissions leads to acute shortage of talent

RASHMI BELUR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Share of total seats				
Metric	CS & allied	Mech+ Civil+ EEE	Aero+ Met + Chem	ECE
2020-21	39%	29%	4%	19%
2024-25	62%	16%	2%	12%
5-year enrollment change	+78%	-39%	-38%	-27%

There has been a 78% increase in enrollment in computer science and allied streams in Karnataka over a period of five academic years from 2020-21, with 62% of all engineering admissions going to these most sought-after courses in 2024-25. The trend has been termed a "crisis" by an expert committee because industry demand for these graduates is "saturating".

While enrollment in computer science, IT, AI/ML, data science and IoT courses rose by 78% between 2020-21 and 2024-25, enrollment in mechanical, civil and electronics engineering dropped by 39%, leading to an "acute shortage" of these graduates.

The drop was 38% for aerospace, metallurgy and chemical engineering, triggering a "critical shortage" of graduates. The drop was 27% for electronics & communications, whose demand is "growing".

This was revealed by the expert committee headed by former director of IIIT-B, S Sadagopan, constituted by the higher education department. In its report submitted to the government recently, the committee flagged this trend. Higher Education Minister Dr MC Sudhakar has termed the report as an "eye-opener".

▸ **Admissions, Page 4**

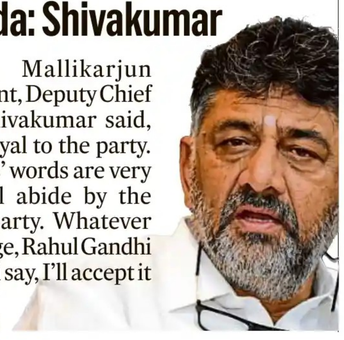
High command's decision is prasada: Shivakumar

KALABURAGI, DHNS: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday remained non-committal on a possible change of guard in Karnataka.

"No decision has been taken on replacing the chief minister. Such being the case, how can I say whether there will be a change or not," Kharge told reporters in Kalaburagi.

Reacting to Mallikarjun Kharge's statement, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said, "I've been very loyal to the party. Our party leaders' words are very important. We'll abide by the decision of the party. Whatever Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi say, I'll accept it as prasada."

Details on Page 4



Quickly

More heatwave days in May: IMD

Night temperatures will remain "above normal" across most parts of India this month, while four-five additional heatwave days are likely along the east coast, Gujarat and Maharashtra, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday, presenting its May outlook.

Details on Page 8

'Not satisfied' with Iran's plan: Trump

US President Donald Trump said Friday he was "not satisfied" with Iran's latest proposal in negotiations to end war between two countries. "They want to make a deal, I'm not satisfied with it," Trump told reporters. Iran handed over its latest proposal for negotiations to mediators in Pakistan on Thursday night.

Details on Page 10

I-PAC raids: ED awards 2 officers

Two ED officers who participated in the raid against I-PAC and one of its directors in Kolkata in January received an award for their "exceptional competence" on Friday. Assistant Directors Vikram Ahlawat and Prashant Chandila received their commendation certificates from Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary.

Details on Page 8

Travel & Sports
₹1,799*# onwards Cabin Size Trolley Bag 55 cmx39 cmx24 cm
₹139*# onwards Steel Bottle
₹699*# onwards Hiking Bag
₹3,499*# onwards Hard Trolley Bag 2 pcs. Set M-66 cmx29 cmx46 cm S-55 cmx23 cmx30 cm
₹229*# onwards Polymer Cricket Bat
MIN. 12% OFF ON MRP Drawing Accessories
₹349*# only Football MRP ₹ 467
₹25*# onwards Plastic Bottle
HOLIDAYS SHOPPING NOW IN BUDGET
Home & Kitchen
₹99*# onwards Glass 6 pcs. Set
₹79*# only Kulfi Maker 8 Cones MRP ₹ 100
₹1,499*# onwards Branded Nutriblend Juicer 3 Jar
₹89*# only Ice Tray XL MRP ₹ 150
₹239*# only Ratan Frosty Bucket 25 L MRP ₹ 280
₹1,099*# onwards Ceiling Fan
₹139*# onwards Water Jug
₹249*# only Welspun Bath Towel 70 cmx140 cm MRP ₹ 285
Apparel
₹149*# onwards Girls Frock
₹199*# onwards Boys & Girls Jeans
₹349*# onwards Ladies Jeans
₹99*# onwards Ladies T-Shirt
₹99*# onwards Ladies Casual Lower
₹79*# onwards Boys & Girls T-Shirt
₹99*# onwards Fashion Cap
₹99*# onwards Men's T-Shirt
₹149*# onwards Men's Shorts
₹199*# onwards Men's Casual/ Formal Shirt
D Mart® Daily Discounts Daily Savings
Daily Essentials & Grocery
₹130* only Liril Lime Rush Soap 3x125 g each MRP ₹ 215
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE Milky Mist Creamy Butterscotch Ice Cream Tub 1 L MRP ₹ 340*
₹72* only Frooti Mango Drink Bottle 2 L MRP ₹ 122
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE Nivea Aloe Hydration Body Lotion 600 ml MRP ₹ 849*
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE Pond's Light Hydrated Glow gel 200 ml MRP ₹ 595*
₹349* only Bella Vita Unisex Perfume Gift Pack 4Ux20 ml MRP ₹ 649
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE Mamaearth SPF 50 Ultra Light Sunscreen Face Wash 80 g MRP ₹ 499*
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE The Derma co 1% Salicylic Acid Gel Face Wash 100 ml MRP ₹ 299*
₹42* only Loose Sugar 1 kg
₹133* only Loose Groundnut 1 kg
₹112* only Loose Urad Gota 1 kg
₹120* only Loose Standard Toor Dal 1 kg
₹30* only Loose Wheat Atta 1 kg
₹42* only Loose Sona Masuri Raichur Steam Rice 1 kg
₹58* only Loose Avalakki (Poha) 1 kg
₹39* only Loose Rawa Bombay 1 kg
Minimum 6%^ DISCOUNT
•Akshay Nagar: 080-22043130 •Bajaj Mall: 080-29609000 •Banshankari: 080-29901112 •Bommasandra: 080-27834507/27834627
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•Gopalan Arcade Mall: 9108968025 •Gopalan Mall: 080-26758814 •Gottigere: 080-25780499 •GT World Mall, Banglore: 9035454757
•Harlur: 080-22442093 •Hennur: 080-25444361 •Hessaraghatta: 080-22960505 •Hongasandra: 080-25742644 •Hoodi: 080-22440850
•Kanakpura Rd: 7259196869 •Kassia (Magadi): 080-23505620 •Keonics (Electronic City): 080-28520303 •KHB Yelahanka: 08029918275
•Koramangala: 080-29901102 •Malleshwaram: 9845113428 •Nelamangala: 8861794447/080-29706074 •R.T. Nagar: 080-29737813
•Ram Murthy Nagar: 080-25667334 •Sarjapur: 080-29600551 •Siddapura: 7411582226 •Srigandha Kaval: 080-29903961
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Impulse/05/26

POLICY PUSH VS REALITY

New waste rules, old problems

Heaps of uncleared garbage occupy the busy road at NR Colony in Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Bengaluru's early push for four-way waste segregation under new national rules exposes gaps in infrastructure, citizen readiness, worker welfare, and enforcement

SHREE D N
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Solid Waste Management Rules 2026, notified by the Government of India and applicable from April 2026, mandate the segregation of waste into four streams at the source, namely: wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste, and special care waste. It mandates that the storage, collection, and handling of waste also follow this categorisation.

The rules have 18 months of implementation timeline, but the city seems to be gearing up for it sooner.

In a bid to familiarise the city with the new rules, Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) organised a one-day workshop on April 18. More than 700 residents and officebearers of apartment associations and resident welfare associations participated in it, along with marshals and officials.

A BSWML official says that Bengaluru is an early adopter, but since the rules apply across India, every municipality is required to begin educating citizens and implementing the systems needed to ensure success.

While the city already had a three-way waste collection system, with wet, dry and sanitary waste, the fourth category now introduced involves 'special care waste', which has paint cans, bulbs, mercury thermometers, expired medicines and other hazardous household wastes that cannot be handled by hand.

"Each of these wastes is further segregated and processed as per the protocol for each waste," says a BSWML official.

"An important feature of the SWM Rules 2026 is that it introduces the concept of Extended Bulk Waste Generator Responsibility (EBWGR)," he adds.

SWM Rules-2026 define "bulk waste generator" as satisfying at least one of these criteria: (i) buildings with a floor area of 20,000 sqm or above; or (ii) water consumption of 40,000 litres per day; or (iii) solid waste generation of 100 kg per day.

In addition, local corporation rules classify a) any entity with an area of 500 sqm or above, and b) apartments that have more than 100 flats as bulk waste generators.

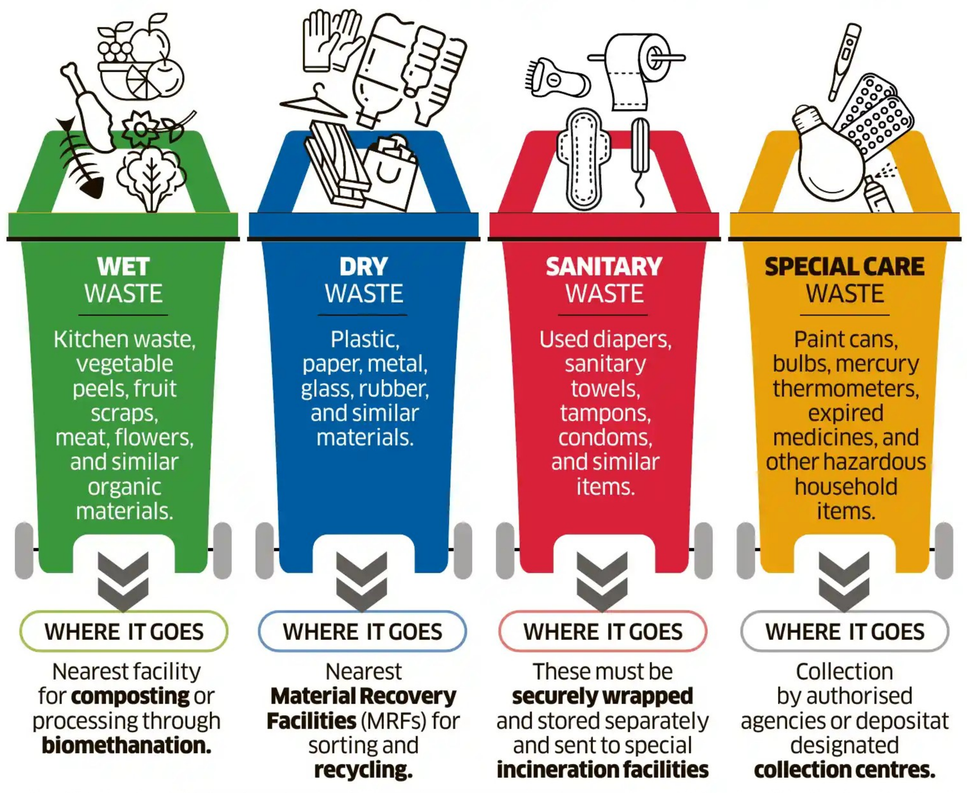
The BSWML official explains that representatives of every bulk entity must register it on the central portal and periodically upload the quantity of waste produced.

When the corresponding mapped processor uploads the processing certificate, and it matches the waste uploaded by the generator, the generator receives 'credits' in line with extended producer responsibility (EPR) credits.

"Existing bulk waste generators who cannot set up and operate decentralised wet waste processing facilities due to space constraints, etc., can obtain an exemption from the local body and procure EBWGR certificates from the local body for processing an equivalent amount of wet waste," says the official.

These certificates are traded in the CPCB portal and can earn revenue for the communities that manage their waste well, adds the official, emphasising that the good practise can also reward the community. On the other hand, if anyone violates the rules, they will be caught and penalised, he says.

FOUR-WAY SEGREGATION: WHAT GOES WHERE?


WET WASTE
Kitchen waste, vegetable peels, fruit scraps, meat, flowers, and similar organic materials.
WHERE IT GOES
Nearest facility for composting or processing through biomethanation.
DRY WASTE
Plastic, paper, metal, glass, rubber, and similar materials.
WHERE IT GOES
Nearest Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for sorting and recycling.
SANITARY WASTE
Used diapers, sanitary towels, tampons, condoms, and similar items.
WHERE IT GOES
These must be securely wrapped and stored separately and sent to special incineration facilities
SPECIAL CARE WASTE
Paint cans, bulbs, mercury thermometers, expired medicines, and other hazardous household items.
WHERE IT GOES
Collection by authorised agencies or depositat designated collection centres.

Bulk waste generators

Buildings meeting any of the five criteria are considered bulk waste generators:

- A floor area of **20,000 sqm or above**
- Water consumption of **40,000 litres per day**
- Solid waste generation of **100 kg per day**
- An area of **500 sqm or above**
- Apartments with **more than 100 flats**

Rules 2026: Implementation Timeline for urban areas

Category	Deadline
Million-plus cities	18 months from the rules taking effect
Cities with 5-10 lakh population	24 months
All other urban areas	36 months

Reality bites harder

However, while the plans of the union government and the way BSWML is gearing up to implement them sound very idealistic and fantastic on paper, the reality of garbage segregation on the ground in Bengaluru remains far from ideal.

"The mandate is essential and a step in the right direction for sustainable waste management. However, its success depends heavily on reliable daily waste collection from both vendors and BSWML. Without this, even well-segregated waste loses its effectiveness," says Deepti Saxena, a resident of the Kudlu area, who also runs an initiative called Clean Front - Clean India.

"SWM 2026 rules state that in cities with a population of over a million, the implementation timeline is 18 months. But why are we not being given that time to adjust and prepare?" asks Satish Mallya, President of Bangalore Apartment Federation (BAF). "Corporations must bring a bylaw before the implementation, which has not happened yet," he adds.

Satish Mallya says that the responsibility of collecting and processing bulk waste has been given to three firms, which he calls a monopoly. "Nobody even knows whether the selected vendors have the capacity to deal with the waste each corporation they handle generates," he adds. While this might make the process of generating EBWGR certificates easier, Mallya worries that without solid end-to-end systems, it might also become a sham.

"Apartments that are not empanelled with any vendor have been asked to pay Rs 12 per kg to collect and process waste, which is way too much," Mallya notes. Documents show that apartments have the freedom to negotiate a price with the vendor to manage waste, which can be less than Rs 12/kg as well.

'Conscious consumption is the key'

Arunkumar, another office bearer of BAF, explains that there are various waste streams and corresponding treatment methods for each. "Are there enough systems to handle this? Who's going to certify? Is someone doing an eye wash of the certification process? We don't want that. We want a genuine process," he adds.

There is a lack of clarity on the types of waste as well. "What is special care waste? What are the special care waste items that an individual home can produce? Citizens need to be educated about it," he observes.

He also adds that it is not just the government, contractors, and the citizens; even e-commerce companies should be roped into the loop. "Amazon, Swiggy, Zomato and all other e-commerce outlets deliver items in packages and carton boxes. They have no take-back mechanism. The government should ask all of them to reduce packaging waste or find ways to take it back," he adds.

"Social media posts boast of making money by selling discarded packaging material. But the reality is that this is not something one can be proud of. It takes a toll on the environment. We need more conscious consuming and packaging, and rules to discourage it," he explains.

Graroot workers neglected

Every system is as strong as its foundation. Garbage contractors, collectors and pourakarmikas on the ground make the foundation of the system on which Bengaluru's waste management stands.

A garbage contractor who did not want to be named says that BSWML officials make the auto drivers and staff separate low-value plastic from mixed waste and send it to the corporation-owned waste-processing plants, which later go to private cement plants.

"When residents do not segregate waste, auto drivers and assistants are forced to segregate plastic from waste. This results in time delays and health problems for the staff. Some of the auto drivers have filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission regarding this," he adds.

"We are forced to segregate mixed waste collected from individual homes and garbage dumps. Many cleaning staff who have been working for years have started quitting the profession because of this. Many of them have suffered from health problems," explains Thyagaraj, an officebearer of Karmika Samrakshana Trade Union that represents a section of garbage contract workers.

He says the drivers are still not being given direct payments from the government, which means a cut goes to contractors who employ them.

"We are the backbone of a clean city, and a key to maintaining public health in Bengaluru," he emphasises. "The government invokes ESMA (essential services management act) when we protest, yet they are treating us as contract workers," he adds.

The protests staged by union members in December 2024 and March 2025 achieved nothing, even though Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar had promised to meet their demands within a month.

This situation makes two things crystal-clear: One, the city may be boasting about its segregation percentage, but not enough citizens are segregating their waste. Secondly, the city will still be dependent on the same system unless citizens are mandated to segregate at home and mixed waste stops being dumped on roadsides; therefore, meeting the four-way segregation target will be that much harder.

METRO

Flyover to shut for 3 days from May 5

BENGALURU, DHNS

Traffic on the busy Tumakuru Road is expected to be hit as the Peenya elevated flyover (Shivakumar Swamiji flyover) will be closed to all vehicles for three days next week.

The Bengaluru Traffic Police announced that the flyover will be off-limits from 5 am on May 5 to 11 am on May 8. The closure is required by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to conduct final load testing after the completion of cable repair works. The restriction covers the entire stretch between the Kennametal Widia ramp and the Parle-G toll. This testing is a vital step to verify the flyover's structural integrity before it returns to full service.

Diversion plan

During the 78-hour closure, all vehicles including heavy trucks and inter-city buses must use the roads below the flyover. The traffic police have suggested the following routes:

*Towards Bengaluru: Vehicles from Nelamangala must divert at the Kennametal factory and use the NH-4 service road via 8th Mile, Dasarahalli, and Jalahalli Cross to reach Goraguntepalya.

*Towards Nelamangala: Vehicles from CMTI should use the service road through SRS Junction, Peenya Police Station, and Jalahalli Cross to reach the Parle-G toll.

*Commuters are advised to expect significant delays on the service roads, which are already prone to congestion. The traffic police have urged the public to plan their travel in advance and follow the designated diversions to ensure smooth movement.

Man arrested for blackmailing woman for 'sexual favours'

Accused is member of Ramanagara child welfare committee

BENGALURU, DHNS

The RR Nagar police have arrested a man who allegedly blackmailed a woman, claiming he had her explicit photographs and videos, for sexual favours.

The arrested is Haniyur Chandregowda, 46, a member of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in Ramanagara, the police said. Sources said obscene photographs of several other women were also found in his mobile phone during examination.

"It is said that he worked part-time as a lecturer, had a PhD and a law degree. All of this is currently under verification. He is also married and has a child. He claims he is separated due to a domestic dispute. Further investigation is underway," a police officer told *DH*.

According to the police, the 43-year-old victim, a make-up artist, met the suspect in 2021. In the FIR, she said that Chandregowda acted in TV serials.

Since she was separated from her husband for seven to eight years, the suspect initiated a relationship with her after exchanging phone numbers and visiting her house a few times.

Chandregowda also told her that he was a lecturer, had a good salary and that he would marry her. Following that, the two engaged in a physical relationship.

Chandregowda stayed at her house for a week, blackmailed her that he had private photos and videos and, using that, continued the physical relationship, the FIR noted. The suspect, using the woman's Aadhaar card, allegedly went into a rental agreement in 2024 pretending to be her husband.

He also added his name to the complainant's daughter's educational documents, the FIR said.

The complainant further alleged that Chandregowda brought his mother to her house, and she looked after her for years. He also allegedly took Rs 5 lakh from her and never returned it.

As per the FIR, Chandregowda also used an ID claiming he was a Superintendent of Police (SP) to skip tolls. He has been booked under BNS Sections 69 (sexual intercourse by employing deceitful means) and 204 (personating a public servant).

Give rehab or will go on stir: Kogilu Layout residents

BENGALURU, DHNS: The families displaced from Kogilu, after Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited conducted an anti-encroachment drive, have said they will go on an indefinite protest if the government does not take rehabilitation measures.

"The government had assured rehabilitation, but to this day that promise remains unfulfilled. People continue to live on streets, enduring severe cold and scorching heat," representatives of the Kogilu Layout Slum Residents' Struggle Committee said.

"For past 128 days, we have been living without proper housing facilities," they said.

"If rehabilitation is not provided in next 15 days, they will begin day-and-night protest," said Muni Anjinappa of Praja Vimochana Chaluvali. The affected belong to most marginalised communities and are surviving without basic facilities, activists said.

Work finally begins on BSK skywalk

BENGALURU, DHNS

Work has commenced on the long-pending Banashankari skywalk project, after nearly seven years of inspections, coupled with persistent demand from the citizens. The skywalk, once completed, will connect the Banashankari Metro Station, BMTC bus stand and the TTMC, markedly improving pedestrian safety at a junction frequented by more than 50,000 commuters.

The circular skywalk, slated to be 280 metres long and six metres wide, is envisioned as a seamless pedestrian artery. Costing Rs 40 to Rs 45 crore, fully funded by the corporation, the skywalk will feature lifts, resting pods, and landscaping, ensuring that commuters, particularly senior citizens and students no longer have to dodge high-speed traffic at one of the city's most congested junctions.

Identifying the urgent need for a pedestrian skywalk connecting the metro station and BMTC terminal, the project was first proposed in November 2019 . The plan underwent several design changes. By January 2022, BMRCL had proposed the current circular design. However, despite the design being ready, progress on the project stalled at the administrative level.

Welcoming the commencement of work on the skywalk, Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya, however, pointed to the cost delay had exacted on the project. "This project was ready on paper years ago but took far too long to move to execution. We must show far greater urgency in developing Bengaluru's infrastructure," he said.

Techie loses Rs 8.14 lakh in Netherlands job fraud

BENGALURU, DHNS: A software engineer from northeast Bengaluru lost Rs 8.14 lakh after falling for a fake job offer in the Netherlands.

The 36-year-old, from Thanisandra, received an email on Mar 11 about a job offer. The fraudsters projected that the Dutch Embassy had officialised his visa and work permits. The techie was told that he would have to make several payments for work permits, travel charges, bank account opening, etc. The victim transferred Rs 8,14,952 to the scamsters in multiple transactions till April 7.

Once the money was transferred, the scamsters stopped all communications. Realising that he had been cheated, the victim approached the police.

Unions hail school kits for kids of workers, question 'high' costs

Flag 'funds misuse'; dept says MSIL rates cheaper than online

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS:

While the state Cabinet's decision on Thursday to provide school kits to 1.3 lakh children of registered building and other construction workers at a total cost of Rs 115.84 crore has been welcomed, concerns have risen over 'exorbitant' prices (average of Rs 8,800 per kit) and potential 'misappropriation of funds'.

According to a document by the labour department, students have been divided into three categories (grades 1-5, 6-8 and 9-12), and will get separate kits. The government has estimated that each kit for students in grades 1-5 costs Rs 8,625.35 (total 39.18 crore for 45,000 students).

Each kit for grades 6-8 Rs 8,199.24 (Rs 28.98 crore for 35,000 students). Those for students in grades 9-12 costs Rs 9,535.63 apiece (Rs 47.67 crore for 50,000 students).

Overall expenditure for the three categories comes to Rs 115.84 crore for 1.3 lakh students. The kits are being purchased from state-owned Mysuru Sales International Limited (MSIL).

Mahantesh K, general secretary of Karnataka Building and Construction Workers' Federation, welcomed the decision to provide school kits, but raised concerns.

"There are many corruption charges regarding their (construction workers' board) previous procurements. If they really have concern for kids, they must ensure there is no corruption in the procuremernt of the school kits".

He said Rs 8,000-9,000 per kit was exorbitant and urged the government to reveal all items included in the kit.

"Earlier, laptops were procured for children (of construction workers). They purchased them at rates higher than those prevailing in the market. In Hubballi, 105 laptops belonging to the labour department were stolen," Mahantesh charged.

A senior official in the department contested Mahantesh's charges, claiming that the kits included several items necessary for students.

"Each kit will have around 20 items. They include pencils, pens, notebooks (100 and 200 pages), mathematics tables book, graph book, bag, maps, geometry box, lunch box, water bottle, umbrella, raincoat and so on".

However, the department's official document does not mention the contents. It only says the kit will include "different books and writing accessories needed for students' educational progress".

The officer said the department was purchasing accessories from MSIL to ensure brand value. "We have checked the rates. The online prices are actually Rs 500-600 higher".

According to the department's note, it held a meeting with MSIL on April 18 to get the quoted prices reducedd.

"Accordingly, MSIL reconsidered the rates and submitted revised quotations on April 21," the note adds.

Conman used proximity to mutt to cheat doctor in Rs 2.7-cr fake land deal: Charge sheet

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

Alleged conman H N Sujayendra, an alleged conman, used his proximity to the seer of Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt in Bengaluru to con a doctor from Jammu and Kashmir out of Rs 2.7 crore in a fraudulent land deal, police investigations show..

A chargesheet accessed by *DH* laid bare the meticulous planning by Sujayendra, 44, who also claimed to be a Special Officer to Home Minister Amit Shah. He was arrested in November 2025.

Sujayendra, in his statement to the police, said that he owned and operated Srinivas Construction since 2015 and became a member of the Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt Trust in Malleswaram in 2021.

Subsequently, he made periodic donations to the mutt for its development, leading to him gaining the trust of the seer Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar. Sujayendra then accompanied the seer across the country for the religious programmes.

This is when the accused met local leaders, top government officials and some political leaders. He took photographs and videos and told the mutt devotees about his influence, the chargesheet quoted his statement as saying.

The victim, Dr Raja Langer, 50, used to visit the mutt's branch in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, and also visited the seer in Bengaluru. Sujayendra met Langer in 2021 during one such visit to Malleswaram and told him that he was a real estate businessman, while also claiming he had influence by using his visits with the seer as leverage.

According to the investigations, Sujayendra told Langer that the land near the airport road belonging to the mutt trust would be developed into heritage homes and would be sold for Rs 1.50 crore. He told Langer to purchase it as it would be worth several crores of rupees in the future.

To convince the victim further, Sujayendra went to Jammu in March 2023 and met Langer's father, Dr Jai Gopal Langer, and posed himself as a religious and devout man. All this charade convinced the victim, who, between March 20, 2023 and September 13, 2023, wired Rs 2.70 crore in multiple transactions.

Sujayendra allegedly misused this cash and gave various excuses, including issues with the land, for not returning the money. Sujayendra also told the victim that he was a "prominent person in the government" and would get them "top positions" just to stall them further.

The chargesheet states that the evidence gathered during the probe conclusively proves Sujayendra's intent to cheat the doctor. The FIR initially named Gokul Iyenger, the seer and the mutt administrator as the suspects. Their names were dropped as the allegations couldn't be proven, the chargesheet noted.

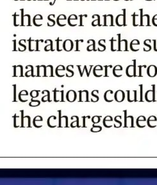
TIMELINE

2021
- Sujayendra becomes a member of Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt Trust
- Acquaintance with victim Dr Raja Langer

2023
- Sujayendra tells Dr Raja Langer about the land deal
- Sujayendra visits Jammu to meet the victim's father
- Dr Raja Langer transfers Rs 2.70 crore

Nov 2025
- FIR filed at Vijayanagar Police Station
- Cops arrest Sujayendra

Mar 2026
- Cops file chargesheet



H N Sujayendra

DH SPECIAL

CHISELLED TO CHARM

Sculptures are put up for sale at the Indian Artisans' Haat organised by Prajavani and Deccan Herald at Jayamahal Palace oin Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/M S MANJUNATH

Sujayendra posed as Shah's spl officer; letters seized

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS:

The pieces of evidence seized by the police from conman H N Sujayendra revealed that he possessed seals, letters and documents to cheat people posing as special officer to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Police filed a charge sheet in March against Sujayendra, 44, from RPC Layout here, for allegedly cheating a Jammu and Kashmir-based doctor of Rs 2.7 crore in a fraudulent land deal.

They recovered a blue-ink seal with text 'Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Delhi' and a red-ink seal self-attested by H N Sujayendra, the charge sheet said.

While Sujayendra, in his statement, said they were fake, police sources told *DH* that they were awaiting response from the MHA to ascertain their authenticity.

He possessed letters to home ministry office in Delhi, seeking reimbursement of fuel expenses (2022-2024), and another addressed to Shah, seeking medical reimbursement.

Police recovered one more letter in which appointment of one S Lokesh as personal security officer Sujayendra is requested from MHA.

In the letters, he identified himself either as special officer, MHA or special officer to home minister. The police seized letterheads in the name of Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt.

Police also recovered a allegedly letter sent via post from the office of governor of Tamil Nadu to "H N Sujayendra, trustee, Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt, Bengaluru".

They also recovered a file containing expense bills, rent receipts and other documents related to opening of a digital library in Srinagar, J&K on behalf of the mutt; request letters submitted to "MHA and Bengaluru commissioner of police," seeking security for seer; a file named "Visit for temple with protocol" containing letters mentioning "H N Sujayendra, special officer to home minister" and "H N Sujayendra, IAS"; and a letter regarding visit of Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami to Venkateswara temple in Tirumala.

Investigators said all these, combined with recoveries, including a letter in the name of the governor of Karnataka to the vice-chancellor of Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, seeking one Aryan Shankar's admission, letters requesting transfer of police personnel in Karnataka and letters bearing only the seal of the Karnataka state emblem 'Gandaberunda' and stating "Union Central Home Office, New Delhi, on office duty", proved Sujayendra's core motive was to con the victim.

Nursing student found dead at hostel

BENGALURU, DHNS: A second-year nursing student from Kerala was found dead in the gym room of a private nursing college hostel in Bommasandra. The victim, Adithyan P A (20), hailing from Thiruvananthapuram, was found hanging in the room on April 29. Adithyan's father Pradeep S, alleging foul play in his son's death, has sought a detailed probe.

Preliminary investigation suggests that it's a case of suicide as he went inside the gym room and locked the door from the inside. In fact, he even left a suicide note, wherein he made it clear that nobody was responsible for his death. Investigation has found that he was possibly under depression.

Police further said that around 20 days ago, college authorities had inspected some students to check whether they were in possession of drugs. The students were even warned against consuming drugs. But the incident was not reported to the local police. "All aspects are being verified," a senior police officer said.

Based on the complaint, a case of unnatural death has been registered and further investigations are under way.

Family seeks detailed probe

The family of the nursing student has demanded a detailed probe into the incident, expressing suspicions around the circumstances of his death. His father Pradeep said that Adityan was earlier upset over false charges levelled against him as some of his hostel mates were using drugs. Otherwise, he had no other issues and even spoke to the family over video call the day before his death. The family filed a complaint with the Hebbagodi police in Bengaluru seeking a detailed probe.

Secretariat staff body opposes move to abolish KSAT

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka Government Secretariat Employees Association has urged the Judicial Impact Assessment Committee not to abolish the Karnataka State Administrative Tribunal (KSAT), cautioning that the move would overburden courts, delay justice for government staff, and go against employees' interests.

In a letter, dated April 29, 2026, to Justice Umesh M Adiga, the Committee chairman, the association recalled that the Centre had set up the Tribunal in Bengaluru through a notification, dated Oct 17, 1986, to resolve rights disputes between government employees and departments, and ensure judicial supervision. Later branches were set up in Belagavi and Kalaburagi.

Seeking to continue the Tribunal in the "interest" of the employees, the association noted that the tribunal was functioning "successfully" and currently about 6,000 cases were pending in Bengaluru, Belagavi and Kalaburagi regions and 10,000 cases pending in courts.

"If Tribunal is abolished, it will put additional pressure on the judicial system and delay resolution. Also, it would force all service matters to the Karnataka Tribunal, increasing pressure on human resources and the judiciary, and raise pendency in courts, said the association adding that "administrative instability" due to repeated changes in government was harming the staff's rights and deteriorating living standards.

Citing three Supreme Court judgements - Ramachandran Shankar Deodhar Vs State of Maharashtra (1973 INSC 216); S P Sampath Kumar Vs Union of India (1986 INSC 259), and L Chandra Kumar Vs Union of India (1994 INSC 572), the association argued the Article 323A gave special status to administrative tribunals and urged the government to take necessary steps to enhance the performance instead of scrapping KSAT.

Joshi: Women's quota bill to be re-introduced in next Parl session

HUBBALLI, DHNS: Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Friday Prime Minister Narendra Modi would take a decision on tabling the Women's Reservation Bill again in the next Parliament session.

After flagging off the BJP Mahila Morcha Jan Aakrosh rally against Congress and its allies, in Hubballi on Friday, Joshi said that the BJP's agitation against the Congress would continue until the Bill is passed.

"The Women's Reservation Bill was tabled when H D Deve Gowda was the prime minister, but the Congress then chose not to support it. Even now, the Congress and its allies have been opposing the Bill. Historically, the Congress has been anti-women," he said.

BJP state president B Y Vijayendra said that April 17 would be remembered as a 'dark day' for the country. "By conspiring against the Women's Reservation Bill, the Congress has exposed its true colours. Its intention is to prevent women from coming to the forefront of society. In the coming days, women will teach a lesson to the Congress party," he said.

Responding to a question on the increase in commercial LPG cylinder price, Vijayendra said that everyone knows the global situation, and that similar trends are being witnessed across countries.

Astrologer booked for sexually assaulting woman

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Chennammanakere Achchukattu police have booked an astrologer for allegedly sexually assaulting a 35-year-old beautician and cheating her of a few lakhs of rupees on the pretext of rituals to facilitate growth of her business.

The accused has been identified as Mohan Kumar J (38), of Kumbalgodu.

The woman alleged that Kumar visited her beauty academy in Rajajinagar in January 2025, claiming his sister was interested in enrolling for a beautician course.

Kumar allegedly posed as a healer and astrologer and convinced the woman that he would perform special poojas to help her business grow.

The astrologer took the woman to temples in Ramanagara and Mysuru, where he allegedly misbehaved with her and attempted to rape her.

In February 2025, he allegedly sexually assaulted her at her residence after sending her husband and son to a nearby park, asking them to walk around a tree for over an hour as part of a ritual.

When the woman resisted, he allegedly threatened to harm her family through "black magic". Kumar switched off the lights and sexually assaulted her, she alleged in the complaint.

The traumatised woman reportedly attempted suicide recently before informing her family of the torture she was undergoing. The woman later approached the police.

A case has been registered and efforts are on to nab the accused, police said.

Peripheral ring road project gets MoEF approval

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has received the environmental clearance for the long pending Peripheral Ring Road (PRR) project.

The clearance was granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest (MoEF) & Climate Change on April 27.

The project, which was long pending, gained momentum over the last two years and the state Cabinet approved the project in October 2025. The project, which is now called the Bengaluru Business Corridor (BBC), is expected to help cut down traffic by 40%.

In March, the BDA invited tenders for the first phase of the project.

Lokesh Jagalasar is new SP of CID

BENGALURU, DHNS: The government on Thursday posted a senior IPS officer to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), while transferring another officer.

IPS officer Lokesh B Jagalasar.

"Lokesh Bharamappa Jagalasar, waiting for posting, is posted with immediate effect and until further orders as superintendent of police, Criminal Investigation Department, Bengaluru, vice Shaloo, IPS transferred," the notification said.

Jagalasar was recently transferred from his role as the deputy commissioner of police (Bengaluru south) and was awaiting new posting.

The government has appointed Shaloo as deputy commissioner of police (DCP), law and order, Kalaburagi city, in the vacant post, until further orders.

"The post of superintendent of police, CID, Bengaluru, is declared equivalent in status and responsibilities to the cadre post of superintendent of police, Mandya district under Rule 12 of IPS (Pay) Rules 2016 as included in schedule II of the said rule," the notification said.

Invites to be published should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

GBA generates e-khatas for 23L properties in 10 months

Gets national e-governance award from union govt

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has generated close to 23 lakh e-khatas in a record time of 10 months, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said on Friday.

The initiative has garnered appreciation from citizens and in response to the work, the Central Government has awarded the National e-governance award (Gold), he noted.

"Close to ten lakh property owners have already received their e-khatas. We will start sending messages to the remaining 13 lakh of them to download and link their documents to the e khata," Shivakumar said.

The GBA has generated 13 lakh e-khatas based on the property documents available with the city corporations. Since the e-khatas have been issued en masse, citizens have to link documents before any property transactions.

"While e-khatas have been issued en masse, for safety and security of citizen property, before transacting their properties in KAVERI (sub-registrar) sotware, the citizens should seed the following in e-khata: owner Aadhaar, registered deed, property photo and GPS, and Bescom meter ID," a statement by GBA said.

Converting 7k 'B' khatas to 'A' khatas to fetch Rs 300 cr

The GBA has already disposed of close to 7,000 applications to convert B khata properties to A khata properties. However, not all the citizens have paid up the fee and obtained new khatas.

"If all the 7,000 pay up, we will get a revenue of close to Rs 300 crore. However, we have received complaints about corruption at lower levels and we will address it and soon launch a campaign," Shivakumar said.

Officials said that every new application for conversion will be disposed of within 15 days.

Asked if response from citizens was poor owing to high charges, Shivakumar said the property value had also increased over time. "We cannot do everything for free. The property value has also increased and since we are regularising properties, citizens will have to pay," he said.

He said awareness among citizens was less and so, response was lukewarm.

Campaign

The GBA will soon launch 'Namma e-khata' campaign to promote e-khata. As part of the campaign starting May 16, the city corporations will hold an open house meeting at 50 locations every Saturday. The public can attend these open house meetings to get their e khatas.

"The documents will be verified and e khatas will be issued immediately at the meetings. However, if there are some problems with the documents or if there is a need to conduct a spot inspection, our officials will get the e khata ready in 15 days," Shivakumar said.

The open house meetings will be held at government schools to manage the crowd and the GBA officials estimate to process at least 5,000 khatas every week.

Close to 200 officials have worked for over 10 months to prepare such a large number of e khatas and GBA has spent close to Rs two crore to generate the e-khatas.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and Bangalore South Lok Sabha member Tejasvi Surya travel by the same car after the inauguration of Bengaluru's first double-decker flyover connecting HSR Layout 5th Main Road with Jayanagar, in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

New rules to promote private parking bays

To be set up along with govt facilities, says DKS

BENGALURU, DHNS

The government wants to encourage private parking facilities and will soon come out with new rules, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar announced on Friday.

Shivakumar said that private parking facilities will also be set up along with government facilities.

"I have seen that close to 20 cars can be parked in a 10 x 12 square feet plot. To initiate such technology, we are of the opinion that we should encourage private companies," he said.

Shivakumar, who inaugurated the underground parking facility at KR Market, multi-level car parking at Gandhi Bazaar along with a few other projects in the city, opined that the public should make use of such parking facilities and avoid parking on the roads.

"Parking cannot be allowed on roads with heavy traffic congestion. We have spent crores on providing parking facilities, the public should make use of it," he said.

He directed the officials to ensure that roads within one-km radius of such parking facilities are declared as no parking zones and if vehicles are parked in such areas, they should be towed away.

Though the management of the parking facilities has been entrusted to private parties, the parking fee is not high, he said.

The Gandhi Bazaar commercial complex and multi level car parking has been constructed at a cost of Rs 22 crore. It houses close to 51 commercial shops on the lower and upper floors. The first fourt floors are dedicated for parking. Close to 128 vehicles can be parked at the facility.

The revamped underground parking facility at KR Market has a capacity to house close to 200 cars and 400 two-wheelers. The facility also boasts of AI cameras and smart sensors. The facility has been developed with a private fund of Rs 6.5 crore under the PPP model.

The city corporation expects a revenue of close to Rs 41 lakh annually from the facility.

Bowring hospital wall collapse throws vendors out of business

BENGALURU, DHNS

Following the Bowring Hospital wall collapse incident, which killed seven people and left nine injured, the Meenakshi Kovil Street, now, wears a gloomy look with no sign of vendors.

The daily earnings of the vendors have been hit after they were moved out of their regular vending zones. This has left close to 400 families without an immediate source of income and no alternative place to do business.

Speaking to *DH*, Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad said, "The government has prohibited setting up stalls on footpaths on both sides of the road for safety purposes. The area is packed for us to immediately find another slot for the vendors to carry out their business."

He also said that the government conducted mahazar to understand the condition of the wall.

"We will wait for the next three to four days for the report or see what next we can do."

Mohammad Sajid, one of the vendors in the lane, said, "The government is speaking about vacating us but we cannot move from here and suddenly build a livelihood elsewhere."

Shahbaz Khan, another vendor who usually sells footwear, said, "I have kids and aged parents at home. If this situation continues, without being able to conduct business, I might not be able to make both ends meet."

The vendors also said they held licences from the corporation to conduct business and getting a licence again for a new place could be challenging.

Two panels formed for investigation

BENGALURU, DHNS: The state government has formed two committees to probe into the tragedy at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital that killed seven persons on Wednesday. Both committees have been asked to submit their reports within a week.

Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Urban, will lead the inquiry committee into the incident, with tahsildar, Yelahanka to assist him as a member of the committee.

The government has also formed another committee of technical experts to probe as to why the compound wall collapsed. It will be led by Mohan K, retired chief engineer, PWD with chief engineer (Buildings) as its member secretary.

EMBODYING ENLIGHTENMENT

Monks offer prayers on the occasion of Buddha Purnima at the Mahabodhi Society in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/PRASHANTH H G

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Cartoon exhibition: 'Mario @ 100' marking the birth centenary of Mario Miranda; Chandranath Acharya to attend; organised by the Indian Institute of Cartoonists; Indian Cartoon Gallery, Trinity Circle; 11 am

International Dance Day: Mayarao Dance Festival; multiple performances and national award presentation, Ravindra Kalakshetra, from 4 pm

Valedictory of art development camp: Mangala M Nadig, Manojavam Atreya, Sachchidanandamurthy to attend; Manoranjini Hall, Chikkalasandra; 5:30 pm

'Mareyalagada Mahaneyaru' (on Shishunala Sharif, D V Gundappa, P T Narasimhachar): Rohini Mohan to attend; organised by: Karnataka Sugama Sangeetha Parishat, near Bengaluru Vihara Kendra, 6 pm

38th Pratishtapana Mahotsava: Bharatanatyam by Anuradha Vikranth, organised by: Vinayaka Temple Committee, RT Nagar, 7 pm.

Patients from West Asia resume travel to city for treatment

BENGALURU, DHNS: The inflow of patients from across the world seeking healthcare treatment, especially from the war-affected areas, have slowly started coming in for procedures.

Several hospitals regularly receive referrals from Gulf countries for orthopaedic trauma, polytrauma management, amputations, and reconstructive or burn surgeries, cancer treatment and gynecology-related treatments. The hospitals in the city have the highest number of patients arriving from Oman, followed by Saudi Arabia, Dubai and other countries.

Speaking to *DH*, Gautham C B, Facility Director at a private hospital in Bannerghatta Road, said, "The ongoing conflict in West Asia has, in fact, led to a short-term decline in international patient inflow. Disruptions in air connectivity, visa processing, and insurance approvals, coupled with general travel hesitancy during periods of instability, will mean that patients tend to defer overseas treatment unless it is absolutely critical."

Based on patterns observed after previous conflicts such as the Sudan civil war, we anticipate a subsequent increase in demand once the situation stabilises, he further said.

Dr Deepshika Raj, incharge of International Medicine at a private hospital on Cunningham Road, said, "We have started seeing a gradual movement of patients from some of the war-affected regions for treatment, though the numbers are still much lower compared to normal times."

Some of the hospitals continue to offer online consultations for patients that can be managed with just medicines.

Double decker flyover formally inaugurated

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday, inaugurated the city's first double decker flyover between Ragigudda and Silk Board. Though the flyover was open for vehicular movement on a trial basis from April 22, the formal inauguration took place on Friday. The flyover, which was long due for opening, is expected to reduce the congestion along the stretch between HSR Layout Main Road and Jayadeva Hospital significantly. The project was developed at a cost of Rs 499 crore.

Dynamic lighting

Close to 50 metro pillars on MG Road, Trinity Circle and Anil Kumble circle now have new dynamic lighting. The BMRCL has decorated the pillars with programmable light emitting diodes with red, blue, green, and white facade lighting.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Rain or thundershowers would occur towards afternoon or evening

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	35.0°C
Minimum	22.0°C

Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	1.0 mm
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	76%
Sunset (May 2)	6:35 pm
Sunrise (May 3)	5:59 am
Moonrise	6:20 pm
Moonset	5:23 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

(SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY)

NOTIFICATION

Hubballi, the 17th April 2026

Notice under Section 20A of the Railways Act - 1989 (Amendment Act, 2008)

S.O. 1932(E).--In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section 20A of the Railways Act, 1989 (24/89) (Amendment Act 2008) (hereinafter referred as the said Act,), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the Land, brief description of which is given in the schedule annexed hereto is required for the execution of Special Railway Project, namely, "Construction of RUB in lieu of LC No. 10 at Km. 16/200 (Soladevanahalli Village)" in the State of Karnataka, hereby declares its intention to acquire such land;

Any person interested in the said land may, within Thirty days from the date of publication of this notification of the Official Gazette, raise objection and use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section (1) of Section 20D of the said Act;

Every such objection shall be made to competent authority, namely , Special Land Acquisition Officer, Bangalore and Regional Commissioner, Bengaluru for "Construction of RUB in lieu of LC No. 10 at Km. 16/200 (Soladevanahalli Village)" in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the competent authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the competent authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections;

Any order made by the competent authority under sub-section (2) of Section 20D of the said Act shall be final;

The land plans and other details of the land covered under this notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid Office of the competent authority.

SCHEDULE

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	Survey No.	Part	Area (A-G-A)	Area in Hectare
1	Soladevanahalli	61	61/*/1	0-2-13	0.0284
			61/*/2	0-1-07	0.0146
2	Soladevanahalli	0	0/*/*	0-12-1	0.1220
3	Soladevanahalli	59	59/*/*	0-0-15	0.0095
4	Soladevanahalli	58	58/*/*	0-12-16	0.1315
5	Soladevanahalli	85	85/*/*	0-7-11	0.0778
			TOTAL	**0-37-15**	**0.3838**

[F.No. SWR/W352/RSP/LAND/LC10/20A]

Sd/-
(NINGAPPA CHANDAPPA CHALUWADI)
Dy. Chief Engineer,
South Western Railway, Hubballi

PUB/68/AAF/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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CENTRAL RAILWAY

SOLAPUR DIVISION

E-PROCUREMENT

Divisional Store Office Central Railway, Solapur for and on Behalf of President of India Invites online e-tenders on Railway's e-procurement website **www.ireps.gov.in** from the capable, reputed firms/Contractors for the following works: **Tender No.:** 96265159. **Description: (1)** Relay Driver Card for single section digital type axel counter as per RDSO/SPN/177/2012(Ver.3). **Quantity:**14 Nos. **(2)** DC-DC Converter Card for CEL make SSDAC as per RDSO Spec. no. RDSO/SPN/177/2012 Ver.3. **Quantity:**14 Nos. **(3)** SCC2 Card for CEL make SSDAC system as per RDSO SPECN. No. RDSO/SPN/177/2012 Ver.3. **Quantity:** 13 Nos. **(4)** MODEM CARD suitable for CEL MAKE SSDAC SYSTEM as per RDSO SPEC. No. RDSO/SPN/177/2012 Ver.3. **Quantity:** 15 Nos. **(5)** Axle Counter Conditioning card SCC1 (CEL Make) SSDAC as per RDSO spec. no RDSO/SPN/177/2012 VER.3. **Quantity:** 13 Nos. **(6)** Event Logger Card for single section digital type axle counter as per RDSO/SPN/177/2012 (Ver.3). **Quantity:** 13 Nos. **(7)** Micro Controller Logic card no. 4 (MLB 2) of CEL make for SSDAC as per RDSO Spec. RDSO/SPN/177/2012 Ver 3. **Quantity:** 13 Nos. **(8)** Reset Box for CEL make Single Section Digital Axle Counter (SSDAC) system as per RDSO specification no. RDS/SPN/177/2012 (Ver.3). **Quantity:** 18 Nos. **(9)** Micro Controller Logic card no3 (MLB 1) of CEL make for SSDAC as per RDSO Spec. RDSO/SPN/177/2012 Ver 3. **Quantity:** 13 Nos. **Earnest Money (INR):** 113800/-. **Date & Time of Closing of Tender on www.ireps.gov.in** : 11.05.2026 after 11.30. The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website frequently before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. Website: **www.ireps.gov.in** EXP-21

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DISTURBING TREND

Migratory pattern of butterflies shows unusual changes

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

There have been unusual changes in the seasonal migration of butterflies between the Western Ghats and the eastern plains of peninsular India, researchers say based on their observations over the past eight years.

Experts have observed that six species of migratory butterflies — dark blue tiger, blue tiger, common crow, double-branded crow, plain tiger and striped tiger (all of them scientifically classified as milkweed or Danainae butterflies) — are no longer completing their traditional 300–500 km journey to avoid the monsoon.

Earlier, these butterflies would begin their migration before the onset of the monsoon to escape heavy rains in the Western Ghats. After breeding in the eastern plains, their progeny would return to the Ghats post-monsoon.

However, recent observations indicate that many are dying due to road kills, cutting short their journeys, taking alternative routes or restricting their movement.

Dark blue tiger. CREATIVE COMMONS

Since 2018, researchers and citizen scientists have reported a steady decline in the number of butterflies travelling between the Ghats and the plains. The researchers have also observed that triggered by unseasonal showers, fewer butterflies are either initiating the migration earlier or delaying the journey.

"The migration pattern has definitely been affected. However, due to a lack of coordinated and consolidated studies, we are unable to pinpoint the exact reasons," says Santhosh S, faculty member in the Department of Zoology at Mysuru University. He suspects climate change and large-scale development works, especially highways, as major contributing factors.

He says butterflies are sensitive indicators of environmental health. "Only coordinated and comprehensive studies in both the Ghats and the plains can determine whether we are already facing the consequences of this disruption or if a larger ecological crisis is yet to unfold," he said.

P A Vinayan, Programme Coordinator at the Ferns Nature Conservation Society in Wayanad, Kerala, says studies suggest these butterflies breed alternately in the Western Ghats and the eastern plains. However, disruptions in migration may also be affecting this cycle, he says.

V Gopikrishna, founder of the Nagarahole Conservation Society, points to road kills as a major concern. "The widening of roads and construction of new highways have led to the removal of trees and host plants along roadsides, increasing the likelihood of butterflies being hit by vehicles," he said.

MISERY & MAYHEM: Overflowing SWDs, tree falls, traffic woes

A waterlogged Sampangiramanagara main road following heavy rains in Bengaluru on Friday. (Right) Slow traffic along metro pillars with dynamic lighting along MG Road. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

Heavy rain leaves B'luru south, CBD waterlogged, exposes civic apathy

BENGALURU, DHNS

For the second time in a week, Bengaluru was brought to its knees as torrential rains lashed the city on Friday evening, turning arterial roads into rivers and throwing peak-hour traffic into a tailspin.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for the next two days.

The downpour, which began late in the evening just as office-goers were heading home, caused severe waterlogging in Basavanagudi, Jayanagar, South End Circle, and the areas surrounding Lalbagh. The Central Business District was not spared either, with scenes from SP Road and JC Road barely a stone's throw from the GBA headquarters depicting a grim reality of civic apathy.

On JC Road, commuters were seen wading through knee-deep water. Despite white topping projects, the lack of a functional drainage system has turned the stretch into a mini-lake. Frustrated motorists complained of vehicle breakdowns. "Once water enters the engine, it costs at least Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 to fix. Every time it rains, it's the same story of neglect," said an auto driver.

The situation at KR Market was equally dire. Street vendors and shoppers were left stranded as rainwater surged across the market floor, highlighting the failure of the authorities to ensure the smooth flow of water through storm-water drains (SWDs).

The latest spell of rain follows a devastating storm earlier this week that saw over 280 trees uprooted and 400 branches strewn across the city. While Chief Minister Siddaramaiah recently chaired a high-level meeting directing officials to take precautionary measures, the ground reality suggests otherwise.

In many areas, fallen trees from previous storms are yet to be cleared, and underpasses remain death traps.

Civic officials have faced backlash for their slow response in clearing water-clogged underpasses, with some remaining inaccessible for over 24 hours.

Trim over 400 dangerous trees: Police to GBA

BENGALURU, DHNS: After rains and winds brought down tree branches at several places, creating chaos on the roads, the Bengaluru traffic police (BTP) have now identified close to 404 dangerous trees in the city.

The BTP has written to the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) to remove the trees or prune them.

The BTP officials, who conducted a survey across the five city corporations, said these trees were weak and branches may come down if the city receives rains again. The traffic movement takes a hit when a large number of trees fall down.

"It is important that we be prepared. Considering how the situation turned bad on April 29, it is important that these trees are trimmed or removed," the letter said.

On April 29, when the city received heavy rains accompanied with strong winds, close to 376 trees were uprooted.

Light to moderate rains over next few days

BENGALURU, DHNS: After torrential rains, along with hailstorms, lashed Bengaluru on Wednesday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted that the city is likely to see light to moderate spells of rain for next few days.

"Partly cloudy sky. Light to moderate rain/thundershowers accompanied by gusty wind with wind speed 30-40 kmph likely," the IMD said in its prediction issued till May 5.

The maximum and minimum temperatures will likely hover between 37 and 22 degrees Celsius, the report noted.

While the intensity was not as high as on Wednesday, the city witnessed light to moderate rainfall on Friday. The showers began with gusty winds towards the evening.

Many areas of South Bengaluru, including Girinagar, Basavanagudi, Banashankari, JP Nagar and BTM Layout, reported moderate to heavy rainfall. Rajarajeshwari Nagar also received moderate to heavy rainfall along with wind and thunderstorms.

A few areas in the northern and the central parts received light showers.

"Maximum temperature were appreciably above normal (3.1°C to 5.0°C) at one or two places over North Interior Karnataka, above normal (1.6°C to 3.0°C) at a few places over coastal Karnataka. Maximum temperatures were normal over the remaining places," the IMD said in its daily report.

No large change in maximum temperature over the state in the next five days, the weather department has predicted.

Valuables worth Rs 1.2 crore looted from jewellery store

BENGALURU, DHNS: Unidentified individuals broke into a jewellery shop in Bagalagunte on Wednesday and decamped with valuables worth Rs 1.2 crore, including 70 kg of silver. Police are yet to stumble on any clues so far.

According to the FIR, the shopowner closed the store around 9.15 pm on Wednesday after securing gold ornaments in a locker while leaving silver items in the showcase. No proper arrangements were in place for securing the shop at night.

The theft came to light around 7.30 am the next day, when the building owner alerted the owner about damage to the rear wall. During inspection, it was found that the burglars had broken into a neighbouring godown, from where they breached the wall to enter the shop.

The accused escaped with 70 kg of silver articles, DVR system, laptop, mobile phone and Rs 1,500 in cash. The police have registered a case and are analysing CCTV camera footage from nearby areas.

Pvt bus mows down 15-yr-old boy, locals block road

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 15-year-old boy was killed on the spot after being mowed down by a private bus on the Hennur-Bagalur Main Road on Friday morning.

The incident sparked massive protests by residents and family members, who blamed the ongoing white-topping work and poor road planning, for the fatal accident.

Varun

The victim, Varun, a Class 9 student, who had recently cleared his exams, was the son of a local resident.

According to the police, the accident occurred around 11.45 am, when Varun was returning home, fetching water from a local RO plant.

With his father reportedly unwell, the teenager had stepped out to help with household chores.

Following the accident, angry locals and relatives of the deceased staged a road block protest, demanding accountability from civic officials and the private bus operator.

The protest led to a massive gridlock on the Bagalur stretch, with traffic backed up for over a kilometre.

The Hennur Traffic Police rushed to the spot, seized the private bus and took its driver Imran Khan into custody.

Residents alleged that the tragedy was a direct result of the delayed white-topping work, which has narrowed the motorable path and forced pedestrians into the path of speeding vehicles.

"The white-topping work has been dragging on for a year. Drivers, frustrated by constant traffic jams, try to speed through narrow gaps, making it a death trap for children," alleged a family friend.

Protesters also questioned why the RO water plant was situated across a dangerous main road, forcing residents to cross amidst heavy airport-bound traffic.

The Hennur Traffic Police have registered a case and are verifying the CCTV footage to investigate the bus driver's negligence.

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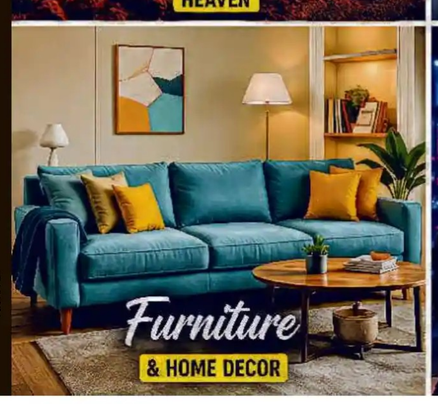
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Workers are architects of country's socio-economic progress, says CM

BENGALURU, DHNS: Accusing the Union government of being "anti-labour" and "pro-corporate," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Friday that workers are the architects of the country's social and economic progress.

"Basavanna had said that work is worship. All labourers should be equally respected. Workers are essential for the social and educational progress of the country." Siddaramaiah was speaking during the International Labour Day event organised at the KPCC office.

"Our government is always pro-workers and we respect them. The state government has provided many facilities to the workers. If a worker dies at work, the compensation amount given to them has been increased from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 8 lakh. In cases of natural death, Rs 75,000 was being given and that has been increased to one-and-a-half lakh."

The chief minister recollected the historic Hay market protest in Chicago on May 4, 1886, where workers protested for 8-hour workday right.

"In 1886, the unions in Chicago fought for eight hours of work, eight hours of sleep and eight hours of entertainment. Prior to this, workers had to work for 14-18 hours. This day of labourers' struggle is observed as the international workers day across the world," Siddaramaiah added.

Plaint against man for obstructing census

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) has registered a complaint against an individual named Anand alias Muniyappa for allegedly obstructing the census work and behaving in an inappropriate manner with the enumerator.

According to a statement by BNCC, the complaint was filed by census supervisory officer Yogesh O G. The incident is said to have occurred when enumerator Rani M visited a house in T Dasarahalli for census work.

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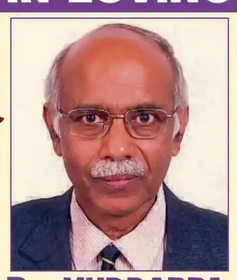
Sunil Samson Dhamanigi
(70 Yrs)
22 Nov 1955 - 25 Apr 2026
Romans 8: 38-39
With a heavy heart, we announce the passing of our dear father figure, uncle & best friend on 25 April 2026.
Remembered by his brother
Deepak Dhamanigi & Family

OBITUARY

Smt. Vijaya Ananthaswamy (Viji)
W/o M. K. Anantha Swamy
(1938-2026)
Passed away on 30 April 2026
Deeply mourned by
M. K. Anantha Swamy, Aparna, Vinay, Shanker, Sneha
Shimoga family
and
Mallipatna family

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Dr. MUDDAPPA NARAYANA SWAMY
You were our shining, guiding light, the best father and caring husband.
Passed away peacefully on 30 April 2026.
Loving sons Amrit, Ravi, wife Mrs Prabha Swamy, relatives and friends.
9886185168

Ashoka: Cong power tussle is never-ending soap opera

'Infra crumbling, investments slowing, governance collapsing in state'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka on Friday decried the power struggle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar as a "never-ending soap opera."

In a statement, Ashoka asked the Congress to focus on governance. "While the Congress leadership in Delhi watches silently, Karnataka is paying the price for a never-ending power tussle between Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar," Ashoka said.

Ashoka clarified that the BJP had no interest in the internal politics of Congress. "But when this never-ending ego clash begins to paralyse governance, it becomes our duty to speak," he said.

The BJP leader also took a dig at fresh buzz about Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's chief ministerial prospects.

'Total leadership failure'

"For more than 1,000 days, the state has seen a government that is distracted, divided, and directionless. And now, the latest twist - rumours of Kharge being 'deployed' from Delhi to fix Bengaluru, only confirms one thing: total leadership failure in the state," Ashoka said.

Ashoka said the "so-called Congress high command" seemed "so weak that it can't manage its own party."

Amid the power tussle, Ashoka said infrastructure was crumbling, investments slowing and governance collapsing.

Kharge non-committal on change of guard

KALABURAGI, DHNS: All India Congress Committee president M Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday remained non-committal on a possible change of guard at the top in Karnataka.

"No decision has been taken on replacing the chief minister. Such being the case, how can I say whether there will be a change or not," Kharge asked reporters. Kharge said that they had not set a specific date to discuss and deliberate on the change in leadership. "Once we schedule a time for the discussion, we will take an appropriate decision. Please do not spread rumours about change of leadership. We will carefully assess and analyse the possible ramifications of the decision on the party, and only then take a final call," he added.

Meanwhile, Kharge expressed outrage over the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government's decision to increase the cost of commercial LPG cylinders by a staggering Rs 993.

"This decision has plunged many in distress. What I find surprising is that people continue to support Modi despite his many missteps," Kharge added. Reacting to Kharge's statement, Deputy CM D K Shivakumar said: "I've been very loyal to the party. Our party leaders' words are very important. We'll abide by the party's decision. Whatever Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi say, I'll accept it as prasada."

R ASHOKA, LEADER OF OPPOSITION

"People of Karnataka did not vote for a 5-year factional wrestling match. They voted for a stable, functioning government. It's time Congress stops treating Karnataka like personal property and starts governing, or admits it has failed.

Heatwave deaths: Little change on ground for MGNREGS workers

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

The recent deaths of two labourers employed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) have brought little change on the ground. Workers continue to toil under the scorching sun with hardly any shelter or adequate drinking water at worksites, despite government mandates during the heatwave period.

Labourers working in Yadgir, Raichur and Ballari told *DH* that they continue to work under harsh conditions as they have no alternative sources of income.

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge and senior zilla panchayat officials conceded that, despite several measures the MGNREGS cardholders are facing severe hardship due to extreme weather conditions. Most parts of the Kalyana Karnataka region are recording temperatures exceeding 42 degrees Celsius and experiencing heatwave conditions.

Virupamma, a work supervisor in Raichur district said hundreds of labourers are still working without basic facilities such as shelter or drinking water.

"In our jurisdiction, most village-level works are completed, so officials are allocating work at sites 10–15 km away from villages. There are no trees or sheds to provide shelter," she said, adding that many workers complain of exhaustion and weakness but continue working.

She also pointed out that, unlike previous years when labourers could find work in paddy fields, they have not had that option for the past two months because officials decided not to release water from the Tungabhadra river due to repair work.

While the government has altered working hours - from 6 am to 10 am and from 2 pm onwards - several labourers said the guidelines are not being implemented effectively.

Digital attendance

Basavanthraj Gouda Kallur from Sindhanur said digital attendance requirements are creating additional challenges. "Unless we mark our digital attendance, our working hours are not counted. Many PDOs and officials do not arrive at worksites until 10 am, forcing us to wait without working," he said, adding that some officials compel workers to continue working even after 10 am in extreme heat.

Yadgir Zilla Panchayat CEO Lavish Ordia said that complaints have been received against officials not visiting worksites on time. "We want to be as flexible as possible to help labourers complete work under MGNREGS. However, there are certain hurdles that need to be addressed," he said.

Most labourers have enrolled under MGNREGS as it is their last resort for income during the lean agricultural season.

Speaking to *DH*, Minister Priyank Kharge said, "We have implemented early working hours for labourers. However, many PDOs are not visiting worksites on time, and we cannot force them to report early." He added that instructions had been given to ensure the provision of shelter and drinking water at worksites.

DELUGE OF DEVOTEES

A large number of devotees participate in Fakkireshwara Mutt car festival in Shirahatti town of Gadag district, on Friday. DH PHOTO/NINGAPPA HAMMIGI

Vijayendra slams Cong's appeasement politics

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra on Friday accused the Congress government of indulging in 'minority appeasement', and questioned the government's 'repeated' allocation of funds to minorities.

"It was decided in a recent Cabinet meeting to allocate Rs 650 crore (Rs 600 crore) to minorities. BJP is not an anti-minority party, but this government has been setting aside funds for minorities just to appease them. Have Hindus not voted for the Congress," Vijayendra asked reporters in Bengaluru.

He charged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with 'insulting' Hindus.

On the CM's charge that the Centre had not disbursed funds for the Jal Jeevan Mission to the state, Vijayendra said, "Funds from the Centre for the Jal Jeevan Mission and other schemes will definitely be disbursed. You (CM) release funds for development programmes. It's been six months since you assured MLAs of allocating funds to develop their respective constituencies. MLAs, who have made plans for their segments, are waiting for these funds, but the government is yet to release them."

Commercial, mini LPG prices...

LPG prices, from Page 1

Opposition leaders slammed the government for the price hike, saying it will hit the common man. Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, said the government would soon increase the price of petrol and diesel also.

"I had said it - the heat of inflation would come after the elections. Today, a commercial gas cylinder is Rs 993 more expensive. The biggest increase in a single day. This is the election bill. From February till now: Rs 1,380 increase - a whopping 81% jump in just 3 months," Gandhi said in a post on X.

The country's largest oil marketing company, Indian Oil Corporation, claimed that bulk and commercial LPG cylinders account for less than 1% of total consumption. No change in prices of domestic LPG (14.2 kg) for 33 crore consumers. No change in ATF prices for domestic airlines (scheduled operations), it said. "Overall, approximately 80% of petroleum products have witnessed no change in prices, ensuring stability for the majority of consumers. Prices of Bulk and commercial LPG cylinders (less than 1% of total consumption) have been revised," Indian Oil Corporation said in a statement.

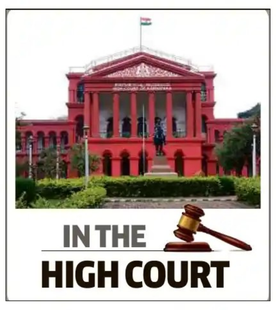
Revenue authorities have no jurisdiction on land under BBMP limits, says High Court

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Revenue Authorities have no jurisdiction to entertain any complaint or pass any orders under the provisions of the Karnataka Land Revenue (KLR) Act when the land, even if it is agricultural, is within the jurisdiction of BBMP, the high court of Karnataka has said in a recent judgement.

A division comprising Justices D K Singh and T M Nadaf made this obeservation, while disposing of a batch of writ appeals.

The appellants, comprising landowners and subsequent purchasers of several residential sites, had challenged the notice issued by the tahsildar of Yelahanka in 2014. The notice was issued under Section 192A of the KLR Act, calling upon them to vacate their lands, allegedly used illegally for non-agricultural purposes.



On September 26, 2024, a single bench had directed the tahsildar to enforce the notices. The single bench reserved liberty to the appellants to establish their right over the lands before a civil court.

In the appeal proceedings, the BBMP, now Greater Bangalore Authority (GBA), submitted that the Kenchenahalli village in question has come within its jurisdiction by a government notification dated January 16, 2007. The court was also informed that the constructions were put up in 2017-18.

The division bench noted that by notification issued on January 16, 2007, the lands in question have been vested with the BBMP, now the GBA, and hence will be outside the scope of the KLR Act. The division bench further noted that the affidavit filed by the joint commissioner, BBMP that they are empowered under Section 243(3) and 244(1) of Greater Bengaluru Governance Act to initiate action against unauthorised constructions, including issuance of notices and removal/demolition of such illegal structures.

"..the said officer has clearly stated that GBA undertakes to initiate and pursue appropriate action, in accordance with statutory provisions, against any unauthorized constructions existing on the schedule lands/ sites, if khata is issued by BBMP/GBA, we are of the view that the Revenue Authorities have lost their jurisdiction to take any action either implementing earlier order from 2014-2022 or by means of issuing of notice and passing orders under the provisions of the KLR Act. In these circumstances, the Writ Appeals are disposed of modifying the order passed by the Writ Court, with observation that the BBMP may take action as provided in the provisions stated supra (GBA Act)," the bench said.

B'luru hotels to hike prices

Hotels, from Page 1

Harish Udupa, owner of a Darshini in NR Colony, said, "We have already increased the prices when the crisis was at its peak a few weeks ago and managed to get through it by paying up to Rs 5,000 per cylinder. If this continues, we will struggle to even break even."

Narayan Desai, a customer in one of the restaurants *DH* visited, said, "The food prices have already gone up and if the increase it any further, we will stop visiting restaurants."

A hotel manager in Hosakerehalli, on conditions of anonymity, said, "If the prices market goes up, it will go up in the black market as well. Many of the restaurants in the surrounding areas have shut down because of the gas crisis."

The hoteliers also spoke about letting go of a few employees if the crisis continues.

Auto LPG scarcity

While the prices of the Auto LPG remain unchanged, the scarcity for the fuel remains. Many gas stations have closed down for the last 15 days. The price of the gas is hovering between Rs 98 and Rs 125. Rakesh Nayak, an employee at one of the gas stations, said, "For the last week, supply has regularised, but prices remain over Rs 100 while earlier it was Rs 60."

Plight of migrants

The relentless surge in commercial LPG prices has also pushed Bengaluru's migrant labor force into a corner. For thousands of workers living in shared informal housing, the 5 kg cylinders (Free Trade LPG) have long been a survival essential. However, effective May 1, 2026, the price of these mini-cylinders has been hiked by Rs 261, making them nearly double their original cost in some markets.

Many workers who spoke to *DH* said that, lacking local address proof for domestic connections, we are forced to navigate the black market where 5 kg refills now command between Rs 1,100 and Rs 2,000.

To cope with it, some have stopped cooking altogether, surviving on instant meals or expensive street food like vada pav and chana. Others have begun a reverse migration and are returning home.

HEADING NORTHWARDS

Date	Price per Cylinder	Change	Context
Early March 2026	**Rs 1,844**	–	Base price before the recent crisis.
March 7, 2026	**Rs 1,959**	**+ Rs 115**	First hike following the start of West Asia tensions.
April 1, 2026	**Rs 2,162**	**+ Rs 203**	Second hike; supply crunch leads to black marketing.
May 1, 2026	**Rs 3,152**	**+ Rs 993**	Third and steepest hike (45% increase).

78% rise in CS admissions in 5 years: Panel flags 'crisis'

Admissions, from Page 1

As per the committee, the industry demand for graduates in CS and related courses is saturating while recruiters are not able to meet the demand in core branches like mechanical, civil, electrical and electronics engineering due to an acute shortage of graduates in these streams.

Branches such as metallurgy, aerospace and chemical engineering are undergoing critical shortage of graduates. And the demand for ECE graduates is growing.

"Computer science alone accounts for 68% of total intake yet operates at near-full allotment. Civil engineering carries the system's largest vacancy pool (47.9%). Architecture programmes — newly introduced in 2024 — show a 63.9% vacancy rate. Unchecked, this imbalance wastes public regulatory capacity, misleads students and erodes institutional accreditation quality in non-CS disciplines," the committee noted.

The committee stated that Karnataka's engineering education ecosystem of approximately 190 institutions, which produces 1,30,000–1,35,000 graduates annually, faces a structural crisis that, if not corrected, will erode the state's industrial competitiveness within this decade.

"Audited enrollment data reveals a system tilting dangerously: Computer science and its variants now consume over 62% of all engineering enrollment, while core disciplines—mechanical, civil, electrical, aerospace, metallurgical, chemical — have collectively shrunk from 29% to 16% of intake in five years," the committee stated.

It further said: "Aerospace engineering, in a state that hosts HAL, Isro, NAL, Boeing and Airbus, produces barely 900 graduates per year. This is not a natural market correction. It is a systemic failure driven by stale curricula, decayed infrastructure in lower-tier colleges, an acute faculty gap and a 40–80% entry-level salary differential between core branches and IT. The consequences are already visible: HAL struggles to recruit structural engineers, the semiconductor industry faces a critical talent crunch and construction majors report difficulty staffing infrastructure projects — all within a state that hosts India's densest concentration of core engineering employers."

As reported by the committee, unregulated IT-seat expansion is collapsing non-metro institutions and denying rural access. "The resulting talent mismatch undermines Karnataka's industrial competitiveness. Oversupply of narrowly trained IT graduates and critical undersupply of core engineering talent creates a widening industry–talent mismatch," it reads.

Higher Education Minister Dr M C Sudhakar said the government would take measures to implement the committee's recommendations.

"I would like to thank the committee for this extensive report which is an eye-opener as far as engineering education is concerned. The committee has also highlighted the unemployability among engineering graduates and as per the report, only 17% of engineering graduates in Karnataka are getting employed, which is a staggering employability crisis. We will take necessary measures to implement the recommendations of the committee," he said.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka
Forecast May 02: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	35.2	20.8	00
Bidar	44	26	00
Vijayapura	40	23	00
Dharwad	34.8	21.6	00
Haveri	36.2	24	00
Kalaburagi	42.4	26.3	00
Raichur	40.8	27.2	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	34.6	26	00
Karwar	36.8	27.8	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	34.8	30.6	00

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	33.1	24.5	00
Bengaluru	34	21	1.3
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	33.7	23.6	00
Davangere	35.5	22	05
Hassan	NA	NA	00
Mysuru	36.2	20	34
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	34.2	19.4	10.2

OTHER STATIONS

New Delhi	NA	22.8	00
Kolkata	NA	20.2	34
Mumbai	NA	27.8	00
Chennai	NA	29	00
Pune	NA	23.1	00
Hyderabad	NA	27	00
Th'puram	NA	27	00

Over 1K borewells go dry, 652 villages grapple with acute water shortage

Water being supplied through tankers to several villages

SHILPA P
MYSURU, DHNS

The water level in 1,010 borewells in various districts has depleted as the summer is reaching its peak in the state.

The state has more than 1.23 lakh borewells. Those in Raichur and Shivamogga districts are among the worst affected.

Several other districts, including Uttara Kannada, Tumakuru and Vijayapura, are also reporting water problems, according to the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.

In Raichur district, 198 villages are facing water problems, followed by Shivamogga with 196 villages, Uttara Kannada with 184, Tumakuru with 152 and Vijayapura with 148 villages. Over one hundred villages, each in Koppal, Hassan, Davangere, Mandya, Ballari and Chikkamagaluru districts, are also facing the same problem.

However, the number of villages facing drinking water issues has reduced this year compared to previous years.

Water is being supplied through tankers to affected villages. Private borewells have been obtained on rent for this purpose. Borwells with reduced water yield are being redrilled, according to officials.

Karnataka has more than 1.23 lakh borewells.

In Bengaluru Urban district, villages under several gram panchayats are facing drinking water issues. In Bengaluru Rural district, too villages are facing similar issues, where water is being supplied through tankers.

G Ramaswamy, Executive Engineer, Rural Water Supply, Mysuru Zilla Panchayat, said that some villages, which depend on borewells where the borewell yield has reduced, are facing issues.

These villages, depending on borewells, are yet to get river water under the Jal Jeevan Mission and the Multi-Village Water Scheme. The works are in progress, he said. Ramaswamy added that villages are not facing any shortage in water supply from river water sources like the Cauvery or Kapila rivers in Mysuru district.

Among 1,128 villages in Mysuru district alone as many as 708 depend on borewells as the multi-village water scheme and Jal Jeevan Mission to supply tap water connections to all households is still in progress. So far, they have hired private borewells in some areas and drilled new borewells to address the crisis, according to officials.

In Mysuru district, the Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department has taken up works to provide tap water under the Jal Jeevan Mission to all rural households, and most works are completed. Multi-Village Water Scheme project is also under implementation.

Susheela from Golur village of DB Kuppe Gram Panchayat, within Nagarahole Tiger Reserve in HD Kote taluk, Mysuru district, said that last week, they did not get water for five days and were forced to depend on unhygienic well water. But the water supply was resumed following the intervention of the Zilla Panchayat officials, she added.

She said the problem arose as a single borewell was serving multiple villages, and plans are now in place to drill an additional borewell.

'India's energy demand hit new high in April, but grid not ready to absorb full renewable energy'

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

India's peak electricity demand hit an all-time high of 256 GW on April 26, surpassing the previous record in January, but the country curtailed over 30 GW of renewable energy (RE) in the first three months of this year, highlighting the need to address the grid integration challenges, as per an analysis.

Researchers at Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) pointed to a positive operational trend of increasing alignment of peak demand with solar generation hours. As many as 88 of 90 days recorded peak demand during solar hours. For instance, the previous peak demand (245 GW) was recorded at 10 am on January 9, when the total generation stood at 246 GW.

While the highest share of 67% came from thermal energy, solar followed at 20% (48 GW), hydro 6% (14 GW), wind 3% (8 GW), nuclear 2% (6 GW) with gas and other sources contributing the remaining 2%. Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh continued to lead the peak demand.

Increase in RE generation

India's total energy generation increased year on year by 3%, where the RE played a major role. Power from thermal sources declined by 1%, while solar, wind, nuclear and large hydro increased by 24%, 11%, 10% and 7%, respectively.

"Despite facing curtailment, solar generation grew. During the Q4 2025-26, 26.6 GW of solar and 3.6 GW of wind generation were curtailed, indicating that available renewable generation could not be fully absorbed by the grid... Solar accounted for the overwhelming share of renewable losses," the analysis said.

The researchers noted the losses, particularly during high renewable generation hours, point to constraints in the grid. "Without investments in battery storage, transmission upgrades, flexible thermal operations, and demand-side management, a rising share of clean electricity risks being wasted even as RE capacity continues to expand," they noted.

Manoj Kumar, India Analyst at CREA, said stronger transmission networks, more flexible grid operations, and faster battery deployment will help manage a larger share of evening and night-time demand.

NGT sets 6-month deadline for roadmap to cut air pollution in Karnataka, other southern states

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed southern states and the Union Territory of Puducherry to submit a sector-wise roadmap to reduce pollutant particulate matter (PM) while the Karnataka chief secretary was told to conduct a monthly review meeting to monitor the works under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

The southern zone bench of Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana and expert-member Prashant Gargava was hearing a bunch of applications, including a suo motu case based on a report published by Deccan Herald in July 2024 that Karnataka was among the worst performing states in NCAP spending.

The bench looked into the state-level action plans, a prayer in another application, and directed the states to implement them in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). It noted that scientific inputs like comprehensive studies were either incomplete or not uniformly available across all states.

"It is imperative to have such data and adopt a structured, year-on-year approach for setting emission reduction targets for key pollutants PM 2.5, PM10, nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO2), and hydrocarbons... In the absence of such data-driven assessment, targeted mitigation of pollution sources becomes difficult, thereby affecting the overall effectiveness of the action plans," it said.

In a crucial intervention, the tribunal asked the CPCB to ensure strengthening of the air quality monitoring networks, and validation of the air quality data through independent mechanisms.

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Puducherry were directed to submit in six months specific action plans to cut pollution. "The states/UTs shall prepare and place on record a sector-wise implementation roadmap, indicating timelines, implementing agencies, budget allocation and targeted reduction in PM10 and PM 2.5 levels within six months," it said, adding that compliance should be incentivised and violations penalised.

While the CPCB and the Unionenvironment ministry were directed to oversee the implementation in all the states, the tribunal issued specific instructions to Karnataka. "The state of Karnataka shall conduct monthly review meetings under the supervision of the chief secretary to monitor financial utilisation, and corresponding air quality improvement," the bench said.

The tribunal took note of K'taka's submission that the fund utilisation has increased from 37% of the released funds in October 2024 to 76% as of September 2025. However, it noted that over 86% of the funds were utilised only for dust control and directed that disproportionate expenditure on road dust management shall be avoided.

DH DECCAN HERALD
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BIG PICTURE
AI in work: Time to up your game!

BOOKS
Looking beyond Delhi's smog.

ART & PURSUITS
A photographer's tribute to Raghu Rai.

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Visit the Armenian Wine Museum, carved out of volcanic rock.

GENDER
Why are mothers of only children often judged?

WELLNESS
Recurring leg cramps are not normal.

Follow Us

Assistant Commissioner and Special Land Acquisition Officer, Chitradurga Sub Division, Chitradurga.

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (South Western Railway) Hubballi, the 20th February, 2026

NOTIFICATION

S.O. 944(E)-In exercise of the powers conferred by sub- Section (1) of Section 20A of the Railway Act, 1989 (as amended on 2008) (24 of 1989) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, brief description of which has been given in the Schedule annexed hereto, is required for the execution of the Special Railway Project, namely. "Construction of ROB in lieu of LC No.15 at KM:25/400-500 (Haliyuru and Manangi Village)" Chitradurga District in the State of Karnataka, hereby declares its intention to acquire such land:

Any person interested in the said land may, within Thirty days from the date of publication of this notification in the official Gazette, raise objection and use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section (1) of Section 20D of the said Act:

Every such objection shall be made to the competent authority, namely, Incharge Land Acquisition Officer Assistant Commissioner Chitradurga and Regional Commissioner, Bengaluru for "Construction of ROB in lieu of LC No.15 at Km:25/400-500 (Haliyuru and Manangi Village)" Chitradurga District in the State of Karnataka" in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the competent authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the competent authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections:

Any order made by the competent authority under sub-section (2) of Section 20D of the said Act shall be final:

The land plans and other details of the land covered under this notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid Office of the competent authority.

SCHEDULE

District: Chitradurga Taluk: Chitradurga Hobli: Hireguntanur Village: Haliyur

S. No	Owner name and Enjoyment Name	Sy. No	Total Extent	Land Owner Extent	Karab	Type Of Land	Acquisition of Land A	G	An	Akara
1	Prahladha H O S/o Late Obaiah, Virupak shappa S/o Anandappa, Palakshappa S/o Anandappa, Nagabhoshana S/o Anandappa Pampapathi S/o Anandappa	34	10–07	0–35	5–36	Kushki	0	10	08	5–70
	Dharmakka W/o Anandappa, Virupakshappa S/o Anandappa, Palakshappa S/o Anandappa, Nagabhoshana S/o Anandappa Pampapathi S/o Anandappa, Obalesha S/o Rangappa, Krishnappa S/o A.K.Obaiah			4–05						
	Dharmakka W/o Anandappa,			1–24	–					
	Sakamma W/o Rangappa			3–23						
2	Adarobaiah S/o Sanna Ramappa	35/1	5–01	2–00			0	12	00	1–06
	Govt			3–01	–					
3	Rathnamma W/o S Bheemappa, Umesha S/o S. Bheemappa, Geetha D/o S. Bheemappa, Ravi S/o S. Bheemappa,	35/2	2–00	0–18	–					
	S Thippeswamy S/o Sampegeppa			0–20						
	Mylarappa, Basavaraju S/o Sampegappa			1–02						
	Total- A				5–36	-	0	22	08	
	District: Chitradurga Taluk: Chitradurga Hobli: Kasaba Village: Managi									
1	Shivarudramma D/o Channappa	2/2	1–22	1–22	–	Kushki	0	01	00	1–11
2	Phayajuddin K S S/o Siraduddin	100/2	1–28	1–00	0–28		0	03	00	0–78
3	B.Chetha S/o H Bheemesha	100/3	1–21	0–38	0–23		0	08	00	0–75
4	Sakamma W/o Shekarappa	100/4	0–15	0–15	–		0	01	00	0–30
5	B NarasimaMurthi S/o Bheemappa	101/1	2–10	1–30	0–20		0	02	00	1–25
6	S Lohith S/o C T Sathyanarayanarao	101/2	0–36	0–26	0–10		0	04	00	0–46
7	Basappa S/o Hanumappamudimallappala	102/2	5–25	4–37	0–28		0	07	00	4–59
8	Sakamma W/o Shekarappa	102/3B	1–12	1–08	0–04		0	02	00	1–11
9	D.Madhu S/o Dasappa	103/1B	2–00	1–26	0–14		0	01	00	1–52
	Total- B				3–07		0	29	00	
	GRAND TOTAL A + B				9–03		1	11	08	

ABSTRACT

SN	Village	Classification	Acquired Exent (In Acres-Guntas) Total (A-G-An)	A Kharab (A-G-An)	B Kharab (A-G-An)	Balance (A-G-An)
1	Haliyur	Dry land	0-22-08	-	-	0-22-08
2	Managi	Dry Land	1-11-08	-	-	1-11-08
		Road	-	-	-	-
		Park	-	-	-	-
		CA Land	-	-	-	-
Total			1-34-00	-	-	1-34-00

• Compensation will not be fixed for Road, CA Land, Park, Layout Road [F.No. SWR/W.352/ROBs-RSP/Land/2025-26]

Sd/- Assistant Commissioner and Special Land Acquisition Officer, Chitradurga Sub Division,

DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/09/2026-27

YOU HAVE BEEN SLEEPING ON THE
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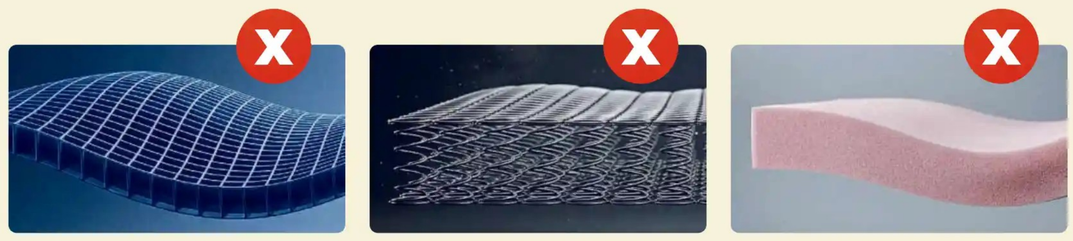

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DECCAN HERALD
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West Bengal polls: Exclusion through overreach

With the conclusion of the second phase of polling in West Bengal on Wednesday, attention has shifted to the outcome of the elections, to be announced on May 4. Irrespective of the results, the polls will be noted for the way the Election Commission of India (ECI) conducted them, raising questions about neutrality, procedural fairness, and voter participation. Article 324 of the Constitution vests in the Commission the power for superintendence, direction, and control of elections, which includes the power to prepare the electoral rolls. The ECI started its controversial Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound states last year, with the stated aim of cleansing them, but the exercise, by design and the manner of its implementation, resulted in the exclusion of many genuine voters. West Bengal witnessed an intensified version of this revision, casting a shadow on the entire election process.

The SIR saw 7.66 crore names on the rolls in November last year shrink to 7.08 crore when the Commission published the first draft rolls in December, and to 6.44 crore in the final list in February. This amounted to the removal of over 15% of the electorate. The final list left out about 60 lakh people for adjudication of their status as eligible voters. The Commission introduced a category of dubious intent in the state for voters whose names and other details carried minor variations in spellings, etc. It also added complexity by deploying about 8,000 micro-observers in the state. About 27 lakh names were deleted from the ones listed for adjudication, with Muslim-dominated constituencies reporting the highest number of deletions. The Supreme Court set up appellate tribunals to decide on the claims of people who found themselves thus excluded, but the tribunals were set up late and had no timeline to finish their work. Twenty-seven lakh people approached 19 appellate tribunals to settle their claims days before the elections. The tribunals cleared only 139 names before the first round of voting and 1,468 names before the second. Their functioning has been marked by confusion and opacity; it is unknown how many appeals they rejected when they cleared over 1,500 names. In the absence of this data, the functioning of the tribunals remains contentious. It is estimated that at their present pace, the tribunals may take years to clear all the appeals before them. That means keeping the voting rights of lakhs of people in abeyance for years, making them ineligible to vote in the next parliamentary and local body elections, and perhaps in the next Assembly elections.

Mass deletion from voter lists and grossly inadequate redress mechanisms raise questions about democratic integrity in a crucial Assembly election

More than 27 lakh people – about 4% of the electorate – could not vote in the elections, for no fault of theirs. The Commission's constitutional mandate is to hold elections fairly and facilitate voting for the maximum number of voters. But in West Bengal, it used its powers to exclude lakhs of voters and disenfranchise them. The democratic course would have been to give the benefit of doubt to the voter and include her rather than adopt a policy of arbitrary exclusion that suited the positions of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is a major contender in the election. An election conducted without the participation of about 4% of the electorate is farcical. The excluded voters could be the difference between victory and defeat in many constituencies.

When the Commission launched the first SIR in Bihar, it sought to make the revision a test of citizenship, shifting the burden of proof to the voter and demanding documents that were difficult to procure within the prescribed timelines. The Supreme Court did well to moderate the Commission's rigour by directing it to accept Aadhaar as proof of voter identity, to make public its reasons for deletion of names, and to ensure fairness in the process by other means. However, in West Bengal, the Court failed the voters by giving a long rope to the Commission, contributing to the delay in the process and, in effect, agreeing to the disenfranchisement of lakhs of voters. It is the Court's duty to intervene when citizens' rights are denied. It failed to do that. While it made some right observations and token decisions on the matter, it did not address the voter's anxieties over a process that reduced her to an outsider.

The Commission also took control of the election process in ways not seen in other states. It shifted almost the entire officialdom, including the Chief Secretary and top police leadership, and placed its own chosen officers in their place. It deployed about 2.4 lakh central force personnel and many armoured vehicles. The ECI ignored many complaints regarding the violation of the model code of conduct against ruling party leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Top constitutional authorities who should have protected people's rights either actively denied those rights or were found wanting in their duties. The West Bengal polls presented a situation unprecedented in India's electoral history, when the ECI itself undermined the spirit of a fair election, and the Supreme Court failed to restrain it. The Commission did not conduct the election with the voter at its centre, but positioned itself as the main player. This does not augur well for democracy, whatever the numbers would say on May 4.

REIMAGINING CLASSROOMS

AI can complement education, not replace it

In an age of disruption, educators must re-emerge as facilitators of critical thinking and meaningful learning

MUKTA KULKARNI AND RISHIKESHA T KRISHNAN

A few months ago, two different groups of MBA students came to one of us with the same curiosity. They wanted to study how AI is changing higher education. Big question. Bigger assumptions. In one of the very first conversations, one group said something that seemed unsettling. Degrees may not matter anymore, they said. Professors may become irrelevant.

By the end of the term, after much back-and-forth, a few arguments, surveys, interviews, and readings, they concluded that degrees are not disappearing anytime soon. And professors? Not irrelevant. But their role must change.

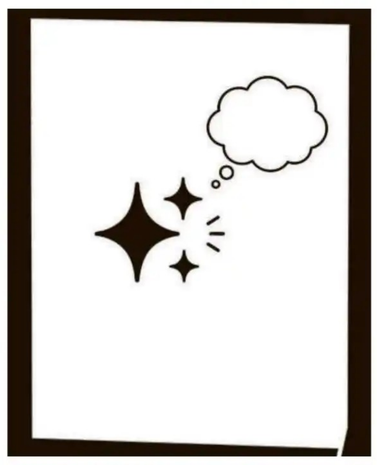
Around the same time, the other one among us got invited to podcasts and public forums. And the questions were always some version of the same thing. Are degrees losing value? Is AI replacing professors? Over time, these conversations made us pause and ask: What is a higher education degree really supposed to do for the student? And what, then, is the role of a professor?

When people say degrees are becoming less useful, they are usually working with a very specific idea of education. In their minds, education is about knowledge and skills. What you know. What you can do. Fair enough. But that is also incomplete. Because education has never been and never will be just that. It is also about character. Values. Civic awareness. Responsibility. Empathy. Self-discipline. In a world increasingly mediated by technology, these things don't become less important. They become more important.

Education is also about learning how to live with other people. Not just next to them, but with them. Working together. Disagreeing without breaking things. Respecting differences. Holding a group together even when it would be easier to walk away. This is social integration. And it matters. For jobs, yes. But also for life.

A degree alone does not make someone ready. Not for work. Not for life. It is the ecosystem around it that does the heavy lifting. Student clubs. Competitions. Festivals. Group projects. The late-night arguments. The wins. The disappointments. This is where skills are tested, formed, and reshaped. This is where people learn how to deal with other people – through collaboration, through conflict, through camaraderie. Because at the end of the day, we're wired to be social, and education strengthens that.

And somewhere in the middle of all this stands the professor. A good professor is not just someone who walks into a room, runs through slides, and leaves. That version is already obsolete,



AI or not. A good professor is closer to a catalyst. They make things happen without being the centre of anything. They connect ideas to real life. They ask questions that are slightly uncomfortable – the kind that stay with you longer than the answers. They don't hand out neat conclusions; they leave you with better questions, and the ability to keep asking them. And in an age of AI, their role matters even more: not to outsource thinking, but to keep that muscle in use, to make sure students don't lose the habit of thinking for themselves.

They also shape the room in ways hard to replace – whether it feels safe to speak up, to disagree, to be wrong, and to try again. They influence whether one voice dominates or many voices find space. These things don't show up on a syllabus, but they define learning. And at its core, learning isn't just about absorbing information – it's about curiosity, about sparking creativity and ingenuity.

Often, their impact spills outside the classroom. A nudge towards a competition. A recommendation letter that opens a door. A conversation that changes how a student sees herself. So what do we do now, as professors, in a world where AI can explain concepts faster and sometimes more clearly than we can? We can design the room so that thinking actually happens.

Thinking, clear and visible

AI can deliver content. Good. Let it. Use it. Our role shifts to creating experiences. Asking harder questions instead of giving cleaner answers. Bringing in messy, real-world problems that don't have obvious solutions. Creating moments where students have to take a stand, not just submit something on time. Making space for disagreement. For collaboration. For failure that teaches something.

It also means paying attention to the human side of learning. Who is speaking? Who is silent? Who is trying? Who is coasting? And why. These are things AI cannot see. Not yet.

The problem in classrooms is no longer a lack of information. It is sameness. When many students can produce similar, polished answers using AI, the task itself must change. We need more open-ended questions. Assignments tied to local realities. Personal interpretations. The goal is not to avoid AI. It is to push students beyond what AI can generate.

We also need to teach students how to use AI well. Ask them to compare AI-generated responses. To question them. To find inconsistencies. To decide what to trust and why. Because a skill now is not finding answers. It is judging them. And perhaps most importantly, we need to rethink what we evaluate. If the final output can be generated or heavily assisted by AI, the output alone is not enough. We need to look at the process. How did you get here? What did you reject? What did you miss? What would you do differently? Make thinking visible again.

But then, wasn't that always the point? To make students think. So AI is not a disruption of our purpose. It is a reminder of our purpose as educators. A powerful tool. It is changing our classrooms. But it will not erase them.

(Mukta is Dean – Programmes, IIM Bangalore; Rishikesha is former director, IIM Bangalore, and Professor of Strategy)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

A krait in the kitchen

Though the mystery was solved, the fear of a snake family still haunts me

SIDDHARTH NANDI

I am an early riser not by choice but by compulsion. I have to get up early in the morning, quite reluctantly, because I run an English coaching centre at my house. The students turn up a few minutes before the class starts at 6:30 am. I do not prefer other family members, especially during the winter, to leave their beds and prepare my breakfast.

I generally take a heavy breakfast with a mug of piping hot coffee or tea before I continue giving tuition to two batches for more than three hours at a stretch. There is no recess between the two batches. Naturally, I have to prepare my breakfast myself during the winter months.

One morning last December, I became curious on seeing something like a slender rope on the kitchen floor under the sink. Though I switched on the kitchen light, I could not clearly discern what it was, as the sink cast a shadow in that particular corner.

I fetched a torch and focused on the object. My heart trembled with fear when I discovered that it was not a piece of rope. It was a very thin snake, about one foot long. I quickly came out of the kitchen to fetch a stick, and when I entered the room again, I was surprised that the snake did not glide away from that particular spot.

Closer observation revealed that the cylindrical, glossy black body with thin white crossbars distinctly marked it as a common krait, locally known as *kalach*, a highly venomous nocturnal snake. I know a bit about this snake, as many people in our locality have been bitten by it.

However, I was sure that the snake, badly thrashed on the head, was dead, as it did not stir even after I poked it with the stick. I was convinced that some neighbour must have beaten it to death and thrown it away. But what astonished me most was how the dead snake came into my kitchen.

Though I was relieved as the snake was dead, a wave of fear spiralled up my spine. I apprehended that a den of those venomous reptiles must have been in winter hibernation nearby. I immediately contacted a herpetologist in our town. He confirmed my identification of the species. He then searched thoroughly both inside and outside our house to assure me that there was no snake burrow. At last, he left, advising me to remain extra alert and, of course, not to kill one if found.

The mystery was solved one early morning when I saw a squirrel flash out in the wink of an eye through the ventilator where the exhaust fan was installed. A piece of wired mesh has now been fitted on the outside wall of the ventilator to block the passage of the squirrel. But the apprehension of a snake family still haunts me.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The QR code system needs clarity and safeguards

The reported introduction of QR code-based authentication at the counting centres raises concerns regarding procedural transparency and preparedness. While technological upgrades are welcome, such changes must be introduced with adequate notice, clear guidelines, and stakeholder confidence. Of particular concern is the absence of clearly defined contingency measures in the event of QR code scanning failures or technical disruptions during counting. Any ambiguity at this critical stage risks confusion and could affect public perception of electoral integrity. In view of the increasing public scrutiny of the Election Commission of India, it is imperative that the commission immediately clarifies the rationale, operational details, and fall-back mechanisms associated with this system. Transparency at this stage is essential to sustain public trust in the electoral process.
M G Hegde, Kumta

Civic neglect

I refer to 'When civic neglect sinks the city' (May 1). Bengaluru, once known as a garden city and pensioners' paradise, is increasingly grappling with chaos, whether it is increasing traffic density or water scarcity. The city has also earned the disrepute of being a garbage city. Crucial civic infrastructure, such as traffic management and garbage collection, leaves much to be desired. Poor governance, lack of accountability and corruption at all levels have rendered this beautiful city unliveable. There is absolutely no planning or preventive action by the GBA. If the first rain has caused such havoc, including the deaths of people, one can only imagine the fate of citizens during the rest of the monsoon season from late May to September. Accountability is most important.
Vijay Kumar, Bengaluru

Curb cyber fraud

I refer to 'Digital arrests: WhatsApp bans 9,400 accounts' (Apr 29). While it is heartening that steps are being initiated to curb scams where 'digital arrest' is used to coerce citizens into parting with their hard-earned money—sometimes running into crores—much more needs to be done. These digital crimes are perpetrated by well-heeled organisations that have the uncanny ability to pick and choose their victims, mostly senior citizens. Despite the RBI and the state and central governments issuing clarifications that there is no such thing as a 'digital arrest' in the statute books, more needs to be done to protect unwary citizens and to recover the enormous sums transferred to various accounts by freezing them immediately after the fraud is committed.
C V Aravind, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

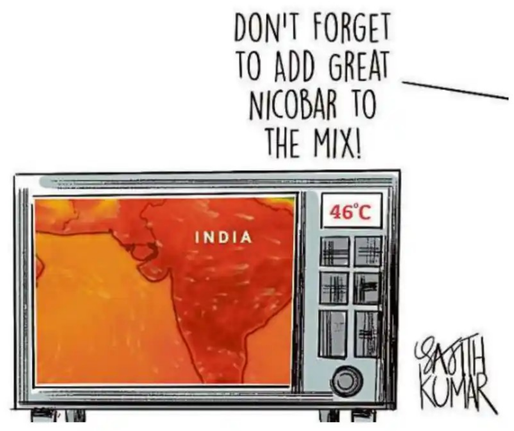
PM Modi has empowered the ED to end the cancer of financial crimes, not to target anyone.

Pankaj Chaudhary, Union Minister

Listen more to what they don't say than what they do.

DaShanne Stokes

TO BE PRECISE



IN PERSPECTIVE

Chabahar as India's strategic lever

India's passivity on the conflict is untenable. It must use the port as a gateway for pragmatic engagement

RAGHU GURURAJ

The collapse of the recent United States-Iran engagement in Islamabad was not entirely unexpected. Both sides arrived at the table with maximalist positions, and what followed has only reinforced the absence of a viable negotiating framework.

Iran's foreign minister declined to engage the US delegation during his subsequent visit to Pakistan, while Washington cancelled follow-up discussions at the last minute, citing dissatisfaction with Tehran's proposals. Islamabad, rather than emerging as a credible intermediary, now appears to have been quietly sidelined. This is not the result of a single failure. Pakistan lacks both the institutional depth and the diplomatic credibility required for a negotiation of this complexity. More tellingly, sections of Iranian media have begun openly questioning its neutrality, even as Tehran signals a preference for Oman.

In Washington, too, Pakistan's position appears to be evolving – from a legacy security partner to a more transactional, low-trust actor. Its decision to open multiple overland routes to Iran, reportedly to mitigate the impact of a potential US naval squeeze in the Strait of Hormuz, reinforces perceptions of strategic ambiguity.

The real diplomatic movement, however, lies elsewhere. Tehran's rapid outreach to Oman and Russia marks a recalibration. In Muscat, the focus shifted from the deadlock over uranium enrichment and sanctions to the more immediate question of maritime security in Hormuz. This was not incidental. By reframing the issue around shipping stability, Iran moved the conversation to terrain where incremental cooperation is still possible.

The subsequent engagement with Moscow is even more consequential. Russia's explicit willingness to "do everything" to support Iran signals a shift in the diplomatic centre of gravity. The crisis is no longer confined to a US-Iran binary; it is becoming part of a wider geopolitical contest. It is in this evolving landscape that India's continued restraint begins to look less like prudence and more like passivity.

India's core interests are directly implicated: the stability of the Strait of Hormuz, uninterrupted energy flows, and the viability of the Chabahar port. Yet, New Delhi has chosen to remain on the margins. This is increasingly untenable. Chabahar offers India a rare strategic entry point into the crisis that is neither overtly political nor diplomatically intrusive. Originally conceived as a connectivity project linking India to Afghanistan and Central Asia while bypassing Pakistan, Chabahar has acquired a far broader geopolitical significance.

For Iran, it represents diversification beyond overdependence on China. For the US, it has historically been tolerable through selective sanction waivers due to its stabilising potential in Afghanistan. This triangular convergence makes Chabahar a diplomatic lever.

The immediate question is whether Washington is willing to extend a limited sanction waiver tied specifically to Chabahar-linked activity, which lapsed recently. Such a move would allow the US to sustain pressure on Iran while preserving a corridor that serves broader regional stability. For India, it would create the minimum strategic space required to engage without vulnerability.

A necessary reconfiguration

India confirmed on April 27 that the Chabahar issue is under discussion with both Iran and the US. New Delhi must secure operational assurances from Tehran – both on the continuity of energy flows through Hormuz and on the political insulation of Chabahar from episodic leverage.

But the real strategic innovation lies in expanding the project beyond its bilateral framework. If Chabahar remains an India-Iran initiative, it will be exposed to sanctions pressure from Washington, leverage from Tehran, and encroachment by China. Multilateralising the corridor by bringing in Central Asian partners such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan would alter this equation, transforming Chabahar into a shared regional asset, raising the costs of disruption for all stakeholders. Such a configuration would give the US a reason to tolerate it, provide Iran with an incentive to stabilise it, and anchor India within a broader Eurasian framework.

New Delhi need not pursue a comprehensive settlement to the Gulf crisis. Its comparative advantage lies in limited, outcome-oriented engagement, focused on de-escalation measures, maritime safety protocols, and incremental confidence-building steps. In crises of this nature, sustaining dialogue is often more valuable than forcing resolution. Equally important is the need to avoid strategic overreach. Any perception that India is acting as an extension of US policy would erode its credibility with Tehran. India's utility lies in its ability to engage without alignment.

If approached with discipline, Chabahar can serve not just as a connectivity project, but as a diplomatic instrument – one that allows India to shape outcomes at the margins of a critical regional crisis.

(The writer is a retired Ambassador and a foreign service officer)

RSS TIMELINE

1925: On September 27, on Vijayadashami Day, **K B Hedgewar** establishes the Sangh in Nagpur to train volunteers and to promote Hindu cultural nationalism

1926: On April 17, the organisation is named **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.** Other names considered were Jaripatka Mandal, Bharat Uddharak Mandal and the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh

1929: In November, **Hedgewar** is officially designated as chief **(Sarsanghachalak)**

1940: On June 21, Hedgewar passes away. **M S Golwalkar** becomes the second Sarsanghachalak

1949: RSS constitution is drafted. **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)** is founded

1951: The first RSS-supported **school (Saraswati Shishu Mandir)** is established in Gorakhpur. The political party Bharatiya Jana Sangh is formed.

1952: Goraksha Andolan, demanding the **prohibition of cow slaughter,** is launched

1973: Madhukar Dattatraya Deoras becomes RSS' third Sarsanghachalak

1980: The **Bharatiya Janata Party** is launched

1994: Rajendra Singh becomes RSS' fourth Sarsanghachalak

2000: K S Sudarshan becomes RSS' fifth Sarsanghachalak

2009: Mohan Bhagwat becomes RSS' sixth Sarsanghachalak

Rebranding RSS abroad

NILANJAN MUKHOPADHYAY

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) — despite recurring squabbles since early 2024 with Sangh Parivar constituents, particularly the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) — remains the undisputed ideological hegemon across large parts of India.

Yet, as domestic support for Hindutva has surged, the RSS continues to grapple with the long-existing gap between its self-projected image as a 'service-oriented cultural organisation' and its global perception, as a sectarian, politically influential force. Outside India, it is seen almost universally as steeped in Hindu majoritarianism, bearing traces of European fascism, and contemporary Zionism.

For decades, the RSS' global outreach focused largely on diaspora mobilisation and financial support for various programmes and agitations. This strategy, as Australian academic Felix Pal documents, produced well over 250 affiliated organisations in almost 40 countries.

However, recent events in the United States and Germany suggest a shift — the RSS is now directly addressing what it calls 'critical knowledge gaps', and misperceptions about itself and India's current trajectory.

At high-profile interactions last month with Stanford University and the US think-tank Hudson Institute, RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale highlighted the organisation's role in social capital, disaster relief, character-building and civilisational perspectives.

A day-long 'New India Conference' in Washington DC aimed at addressing what the Hudson Institute stated as 'critical knowledge gaps in Washington regarding India's current trajectory'. The highlight was Hosabale's fireside chat with Walter Russell Mead, Distinguished Fellow in Strategy and Statesmanship, at the Hudson Institute.

Hosabale used the platform to assert that the RSS is not an Indian version of the Ku Klux Klan, the US white supremacist group. He insisted that neither the organisation nor the Hindu community espouses chauvinism. He claimed that the US' misconceptions about the RSS mirror outdated stereotypes of India as a "land of snakes, slums, and swamis". He blamed Indian political adversaries, Western media, and sections of the intelligentsia for projecting the RSS as anti-minority, anti-development and anti-modernisation.

Yet, Hosabale's articulation about Hindu philosophy and culture — that the whole world is one family and rejects supremacy — is highly problematic. The Sangh Parivar neither recognises diversity within Hinduism nor offers space to 'non-Indic' religions whose '*punya bhoomi*' (holy land) lies outside India. This underscores its supremacist orientation. Hosabale's claim that the saffron fraternity sees 'oneness in everything, living and non-living' paradoxically undermines India's cherished principle of unity in diversity.

The views and factual assertions that Hosabale showcased were steeped in irony. When claiming that the RSS was a "people's voluntary movement inspired by cultural ethos and civilisation values of the ancient society of India, which is generally known as Hindu culture", he excluded the heritage of the medieval era. The Right-wing ecosystem has for decades argued for the physical and conceptual erasure of this period by depicting it, alternatively, as foreign, invasive, and obliterative of the 'Hindu period'. Hosabale also portrayed India's civilisational strength as vital in times of global conflicts — though New Delhi has avoided mediatory roles in recent years.

The RSS' international outreach clearly enjoys tacit government support. Since RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat's 2018 lectures in New Delhi, the organisation has sought to shed its shadowy image. Yet, its exclusivist character ensures women cannot formally be a part of the RSS but only associate through the Rashtra Sevika Samiti. Also, its critics at home and abroad continue to challenge its claims. Despite the assertions of the variety that Hosabale made, it remains under scrutiny.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom recently recommended targeted sanctions on the RSS, citing "severe violations of religious freedom". India's Ministry of External Affairs almost immediately dismissed the report as "distorted and motivated".

The real test will be when the RSS' efforts at altering its global image are thrown open to unrestricted audiences. In such a foreseeable future, critics within the diaspora as well as the international community may unite to contest the RSS narrative — one that seeks to veil its real beliefs beneath civilisational rhetoric.

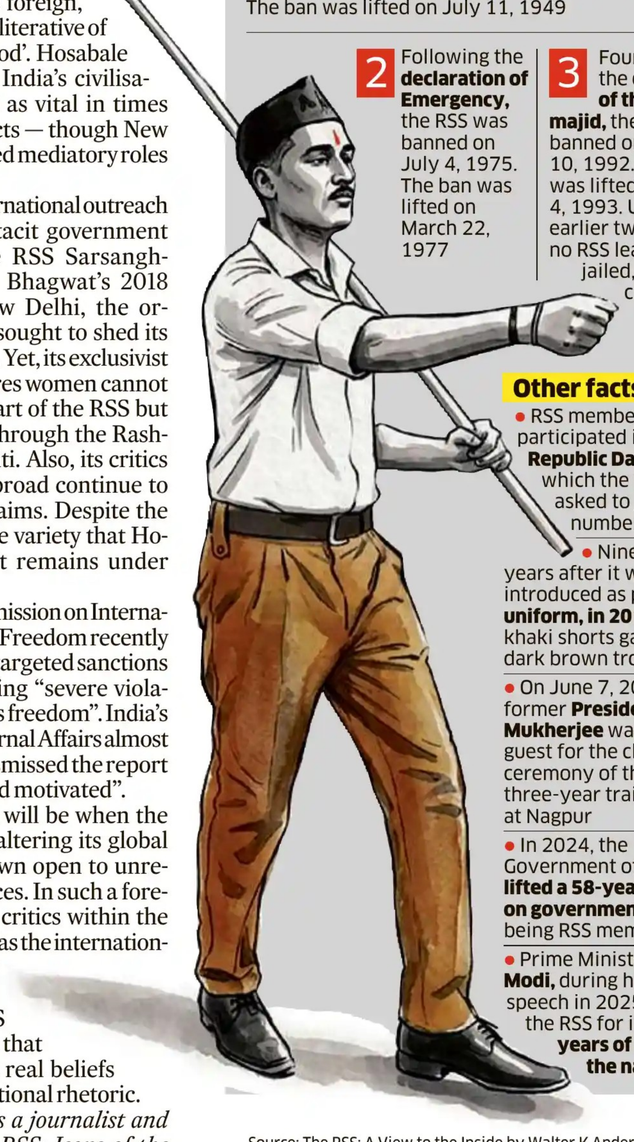
(The writer is a journalist and author of 'The RSS: Icons of the Indian Right')

The three bans

1 Following the **assassination of Mahatma Gandhi,** a national ban was placed on the RSS on February 4, 1948. This was driven by suspicion of its involvement in the assassination, as Gandhi's killer, Nathuram Godse, was a former RSS member. The ban was lifted on July 11, 1949

2 Following the **declaration of Emergency,** the RSS was banned on July 4, 1975. The ban was lifted on March 22, 1977

3 Four days after the **demolition of the Babri majid,** the RSS was banned on December 10, 1992. The ban was lifted on June 4, 1993. Unlike the earlier two bans, no RSS leader was jailed, or shaka closed.



Other facts

- RSS members participated in the **1963 Republic Day Parade,** in which the public was asked to join in large numbers
- Ninety years after it was first introduced as part of the **uniform, in 2016,** the khaki shorts gave way to dark brown trousers
- On June 7, 2018, former **President Pranab Mukherjee** was the chief guest for the closing ceremony of the RSS' three-year training camp, at Nagpur
- In 2024, the Government of India **lifted a 58-year-old ban on government servants** being RSS members
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi,** during his I-Day speech in 2025, praised the RSS for its **"100 years of service to the nation"**

Source: The RSS: A View to the Inside by Walter K Andersen and Shridhar D Damle, Four EPW articles by Walter K Andersen in March 1972, media reports

Hosabale counters Western misconceptions

ARUN ANAND

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale visited the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany last month. These visits hold special significance in the context of the organisation observing its centenary year. It isn't the first time that a senior RSS functionary has visited the West. Visits by RSS functionaries to the Western world have been taking place for decades. The idea has always been to engage with the rest of the world on civilisational issues.

These visits, however, mark a milestone in the RSS' 100-year journey, as it went much beyond the organisation's outreach to all sections of society.

Hosabale's engagements at Stanford University and the Hudson Institute in Washington marked a shift from 'outreach' to intellectual engagement on civilisational issues between Indian and US thought leaders. Beyond economics and geopolitics, these interactions could open the doors for new people-to-people engagement between the two great democracies.

Ethical use of technology

On April 17, Hosabale was invited to address Thrive 2026 at Stanford University. The title of the panel — 'Science, Knowledge Systems and Civilizational Leadership' — itself explains the foundation of the engagement between important sections of the US intelligentsia and the RSS. He spelt out the contours of this engagement when he said, "The purpose in being here is to share knowledge from Indian civilisation and to learn from the rest of the world."

Contrary to the common misconception that the RSS is a revivalist organisation, what Hosabale said in the heart of Silicon Valley may initiate a new debate in the Western world on the key issue of 'ethical use of technology'. The RSS general secretary emphasised the need for democratising knowledge so that it becomes accessible across societies, placing people on a more equal footing.

He argued that any technology designed for human welfare must be evaluated on three parameters — economy, ecology and ethics. Technologies that widen inequality, degrade nature or violate ethical norms ultimately harm both society and the environment. In this context, he invoked the principle that *jnana* (knowledge) must be guided by *viveka* (wisdom or rational discernment).

Busting myths

On April 24, at the Hudson Institute, the RSS general secretary was interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* columnist Walter Russell Mead. Hosabale addressed several myths propagated about the RSS, especially in Western academia and media. He rejected the comparison of the RSS with the Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist hate group that employed violence, intimidation and terror against minorities in the US. Hosabale called the comparison incorrect, and stated that the RSS sees Hindu identity as civilisational, not religious. He also explained that the RSS is often misunderstood due to long-standing narratives portraying it as anti-minority, anti-Christian, anti-modern and supremacist. That's not true, because Hindu philosophy is based on oneness and the idea of a universal family, not supremacy.

The fact is that the RSS is less concerned with dispelling misconceptions about itself and more focused on creating synergies on civilisational issues. It is not seeking validation from other countries; rather, its focus is on forging civilisational alliances with like-minded organisations and individuals.

During the US visit, anti-RSS groups attempted a pushback on digital platforms. However, they failed to derail this 'civilisational dialogue' between Indian and American societies — one that is poised to gain momentum and deliver mutual benefit in the time to come.

(The writer is a journalist and the author of multiple books on the RSS)

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

Finding the long-lost smell map

The odour receptors in the nose are not distributed at random but organised in a precise spatial pattern, writes Emily Anthes

Over the past century, scientists have mapped several of the body's sensory systems in microscopic detail, discovering that the cells that process sight, sound and touch are arranged in predictable spatial patterns.

Now, two teams of scientists have managed to map the mouse's nose. Using advanced genetic sequencing and imaging techniques, the researchers found that each of the 1,100 different types of olfactory receptors in the mouse nose occupied a distinct and predictable position, consistent from mouse to mouse.

The findings, published in two papers in the journal *Cell* on Tuesday, represent the first comprehensive, fine-scale maps of odour receptors in the nose. They suggest that topographic maps may be as fundamental to olfaction as they are to other senses.

"The organisation of information in space is a major organising principle for all sensory systems, and that is what has, until now, made olfaction super weird," said Sandeep Robert Datta, a neurobiologist at Harvard University and an author of one of the new papers. "We have, to some extent, unveiled this long-lost map for smell."

Scientists have not yet demonstrated that the same sort of map exists in the human nose, and do not yet understand why the receptors are arranged as they are. But the research sheds light on how the olfactory system develops and paves the way for a better understanding of an often overlooked sense.

"Having this comprehensive understanding, this broad understanding of the organisation of the main olfactory system is absolutely essential to understand how we process scent," said Catherine Dulac, a molecular biologist and neuroscientist at Harvard and an author of the other paper.

Topographic maps preserve key sensory information about the world and help the brain process that information more efficiently. In the ear and the auditory cortex, for instance, adjacent cells detect adjacent sound frequencies. In the eye and the visual cortex, neighbouring neurons process information from neighbouring points in the visual field.

But scientists have not been able to detect equivalent maps in the nose, which contains a staggeringly diverse array of olfactory receptors. These receptors are specially shaped proteins that sit on the surface of neurons and bind to complementary odour molecules. Humans have several hundred different types of these receptors, but some species, including mice, have 1,000 or more. Each receptor type binds to a different set of odour molecules, and each neuron in the nose carries just one type of receptor.

Scientists had previously discovered that the nose could be divided into several broad zones, containing different sets of olfactory receptors. But within those zones, experts long believed, the receptors were distributed randomly.

In their new study, Datta and his colleagues analysed neurons from mouse noses to determine exactly which genes — of the many in the mouse genome — were active, or expressed, in each individual neuron.

That data revealed which specific olfactory receptor each neuron expressed. But the scientists also identified hundreds of additional genes with a variety of functions whose activity seemed to vary from neuron to neuron, depending on which receptor type was present.

Some of these genes were known to be active only in certain regions of the nose, while others were known to help guide neuron development in physical space. The researchers hypothesised that these genes might help determine which receptor a given neuron expressed — and that they might do so based on the neuron's location in physical space.

To test their hypothesis, the researchers analysed larger samples of mouse nasal tissue, using advanced spatial imaging technology to pinpoint where these various genes were expressed in physical space.

Dulac's team had been using the same imaging technology for a separate project, part of a federally funded effort to build a detailed cellular atlas of the entire mouse brain. For their study, Dulac and her colleagues mapped the expression of olfactory receptor genes in tissue samples from both the nose and the olfactory bulb, which is the brain structure that receives information from the nose.

Ultimately, the teams produced similar maps, with the receptors in consistent locations. They also found that the map of neurons in the olfactory bulb mirrored the map in the nose. In subsequent experiments, Datta's team also found that chemical gradients in the nose seemed to help guide the formation of this map, in effect "telling" sensory neurons where they are positioned in space and, ultimately, which type of olfactory receptor to express.

"I think this is really a highly tenable hypothesis," said James Schwob, a neurobiologist who studies smell at Tufts University and was not involved in the new research. The study provides "a deeper molecular understanding of how position in the nose is encoded genetically," he added, "and also what mechanisms in the tissue might be responsible for setting that."

Linda Buck, a neurobiologist and a Nobel Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine, who now studies olfaction at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Centre in Seattle, calls the new research "groundbreaking." She said that she was particularly excited about the discovery of hundreds of genes that might play a role in regulating the receptors that neurons express.

Still, the big question remains: Why are certain receptors located where they are, and how might that help the brain make sense of odours? One possibility is that adjacent neurons detect odour molecules with similar chemical structures. Another is that the map is organised by meaning, with attractive odours, like the scent of one's own offspring, detected in one area and repellent ones, like the smell of a predator, processed in another.

-THE NEW YORK TIMES

DID YOU KNOW?

How heat can hit young songbirds

In the animal kingdom, the hardest hit victims of the rise in temperature may be the youngest and smallest songbirds, according to new research.

Scientists at the Department of Evolution and Ecology, University of California, Davis, wanted to investigate how temperature affects the growth of baby birds and how factors such as their age, size, and parental care make them more or less vulnerable to the weather.

To find out, the team monitored 31 nests and 113 wild barn swallow nestlings in Boulder County, Colorado, as they detail in a paper published in the journal PLOS One. They chose this species because its chicks are born featherless and cannot regulate their body temperature early on, making them especially sensitive to the environment. Digital thermometers were placed next to each nest to record the air temperature immediately around it every 15 minutes. Additionally, the scientists weighed the chicks and measured their wings at three developmental stages (3 to 4 days old, 8 to 9 days old, and 11 to 13 days old) and observed how often the parents brought them food.

The study found that the impact of cold largely depends on when the chicks are exposed to it. Chillier conditions early in development, before they can keep their own bodies warm, resulted in a lower body mass. However, this negative effect was not detectable in older nestlings as they could thermoregulate, which is the ability to maintain a constant body temperature regardless of the external environment.

"Lower minimum temperatures were associated with lower nestling mass in early but not late development (before but not after the putative development of thermoregulatory independence)," wrote the study authors.

Parental feeding provided some protection from the elements. Nestlings fed regularly by both parents were less affected by cold temperatures.

Hot, variable temperatures were associated with lower body mass and smaller wing size, which could affect their ability to fly. In each brood, the smallest chick was more vulnerable to temperature fluctuations and often struggled to maintain body mass, although the evidence was marginal.

The researchers suggest that these combined factors create a complex survival landscape for young birds. "These findings indicate the existence of fine-scale heterogeneity in which the effects of temperature on nestling development are sensitive to metabolic constraints and early-life social environment."

The study tracked only one bird group over a single season. More work is needed to determine whether the patterns hold across other species over several years.

-Phys.org

IN BRIEF

B'desh objects to Himanta's remarks

▸ **DHAKA, PTI:** Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry has summoned India's acting High Commissioner Pawan Badhe and lodged a formal protest over certain comments made by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Himanta Biswa Sarma

Director General (South Asia) Ishrat Jahan conveyed Bangladesh's position to the Indian diplomat on Thursday, an official was quoted as saying by the UNB news service.

Sarma last week said 20 foreign nationals were apprehended in Assam and pushed back to Bangladesh.

Bihar Cong man dies in mishap

▸ **KANNAUJ (UP), PTI:** Praveen Singh Kushwaha, a Congress leader from Bhagalpur, Bihar, died in a road accident near Kannauj on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway on Friday.

Kushwaha's car crashed into a roadside pillar around 12.30 pm near Ranwa as the driver reportedly fell asleep while driving. Three others were injured in the accident.

Govt help for 'skeleton' man

▸ **BHUBANESWAR/KEONJHAR, PTI:** The Odisha man who hit the headlines for carrying his sister's skeleton to a bank as proof of death to withdraw her money has been made the beneficiary of a slew of government schemes. Munda and his brother's house got electricity connections within hours of the Revenue Divisional Commissioner's visit on Thursday. He has also been enrolled in a state government scheme for monthly financial assistance.

Census: 82 lakh self-enumerate

▸ **NEW DELHI, PTI:** Around 82 lakh households have availed the self-enumeration facility so far during the initial Houselisting and Housing Operations (HLO) phase of Census 2027, a government statement on Friday said. In Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, MP and Chhattisgarh, enumerators hit the ground on Friday, starting field operations of the HLO exercise.

One dies of brain fever in Kerala

▸ **THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PTI:** A 26-year-old woman undergoing treatment for suspected amoebic meningoencephalitis, also known as brain fever, died at the Government Medical College Hospital here on Friday, health department officials said.

The deceased was identified as Arya, an Alappuzha native. The death comes after a brief lull in reported cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis in the state.

SIT to probe cousins' death

▸ **HAZARIBAG, PTI:** An SIT has been formed in the death of three cousins, two women and a man, whose bodies were found in a forest area in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district four days ago. No external injury marks were found on the bodies of the deceased in the post-mortem reports.

UP: Loud music 'kills' chickens

▸ **LUCKNOW, DHNS:** A case was registered against the owner of a DJ after 140 chickens died at a poultry farm in UP's Sultanpur district, allegedly owing to the loud music during a wedding procession, which passed by the farm.

Warmer nights, more heatwave days in some parts of India this month

A man covers a child on a hot summer day, in Bikaner, Rajasthan, on Friday. PTI

Met department predicts below-normal day temperatures in most states

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Night temperatures will remain "above normal" across most parts of India this month, while four to five additional heatwave days are likely along the east coast, Gujarat and Maharashtra, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday, presenting its May outlook.

Barring a few pockets in Central and Northwest India, night temperatures will remain high across the country. Day temperatures, on the other hand, will remain "below normal" in most states, except in South India, Northeast, Gujarat, Ladakh, and East UP.

"Nights are turning warmer due to climate change, whose impacts are more pronounced on night temperatures. When rain is expected, nights become warmer due to the clouds that prevent heat release," said IMD Director General of Meteorology Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

Gujarat, Maharashtra, almost the entire East Coast, West Bengal, southern Himachal and parts of Uttarakhand are likely to experience four-five additional heatwave days compared to the annual average. Temperatures may be 3-5° C above normal on those days.

Gujarat, the peninsular states, and northeast India will have above-normal day and night temperatures.

MAY FORECAST

- 4-5 extra heatwave days likely along East Coast, Gujarat, Maharashtra, with temperatures rising 3-5° C above normal
- Gujarat, peninsular states, NE to face hotter days, nights
- Western Disturbance to bring brief respite in NW

The IMD declares a heatwave when the maximum temperature reaches 40°C in the plains, 30°C in hilly areas and 37°C in coastal regions, with a departure of at least 4-5°C from the normal maximum.

A heatwave is also declared when the maximum temperature touches or exceeds 45° C. Scientific studies have shown that the number of heatwave days is going to rise in India.

For residents of northwest India, a brief respite is expected this week due to an approaching Western Disturbance, which will be active between May 2 and May 6. Thunderstorms may also occur in eastern, northeastern and peninsular India.

Mohapatra said El Nino — an unusual warming of the Pacific Ocean that influences weather worldwide — will develop by July, influencing the southwest monsoon. Monsoon winds are expected to prevail over the Andaman Sea by the third week of May.

Fairly widespread to widespread rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds (40-60 kmph), with heavy to very heavy showers, is likely over Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim and northeast India this week.

Repolling in 15 Bengal booths today

4 in Diamond Harbour, 11 in Magrahat Paschim

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
KOLKATA, DHNS

The Election Commission (EC) on Friday ordered repolling in 15 booths across two Assembly constituencies in West Bengal, with a demand for repolling in about 30 booths in another seat still under consideration.

Repolling in four booths of Diamond Harbour and 11 booths of Magrahat Paschim will be held on Saturday, said the EC in a letter to the state's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Manoj Agarwal. The EC declared the voting conducted in these 15 booths "void" after reviewing reports submitted by returning officers (ROs) and observers.

The two constituencies are among the 142 that went to the polls during the second phase on April 29.

The EC received 32 complaints regarding repolling demands in Falta, 29 in Diamond Harbour, 13 in Magrahat, and three in Budge Budge. It has not declared repolling in any booth in Falta or Budge Budge, according to the latest reports.

The allegations

The poll panel reportedly received multiple complaints of irregularities during the second phase of polling, mostly from the BJP.

Allegations ranged from voter intimidation by TMC supporters to tapes being applied on EVMs to force votes for one candidate, and manipulation of CCTV cameras.

Security personnel stand guard outside a strong room at Khudiram Anushilan Kendra in Kolkata on Friday. PTI

Counting staff case in SC

TMC has filed a plea in the Supreme Court challenging Calcutta High Court's Thursday order, which declined to interfere in the decision to appoint Union government staff as supervisor and assistant during the counting of votes on Monday.

"The TMC, frustrated by the wave in favour of our party across West Bengal, resorted to such tricks in some booths in Magrahat and Diamond Harbour. We welcome the EC's decision to order repolling," BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari said.

The EC assigned its special observer, Subrata Gupta, to carry out on-ground inspections in the four constituencies where repolling demands had been raised.

Meanwhile, at least three incidents of post-poll violence were reported from Murshidabad, Malda and North 24 Parganas districts, police said on Friday.

TMC, BJP spar over strongroom security

KOLKATA, DHNS: The ruling Trinamool Congress and the BJP on Friday engaged in a war of words over the security of strongrooms, where EVMs are stored after the two-phase polling in West Bengal.

The TMC warned that any attempt to tamper with the people's mandate through technical sabotage would not be tolerated.

A day after CM Mamata Banerjee alleged a plan to replace EVMs before the May 4 counting to give the BJP an edge, a TMC delegation met the Chief Electoral Officer and lodged a strong objection to the "repeated and highly suspicious disruptions in CCTV surveillance" at multiple locations.

On Thursday, Mamata visited Sakhawat Memorial School, which houses the EVMs and VVPATs of Bhabanipur. Later, BJP's Suvendu Adhikari also inspected the same strongroom. "What she is doing is nothing short of dramabazi (theatrics). She rushed to the counting centre in a vehicle fitted with facilities like a washroom and stayed there for four hours. Even if she wants to change the outcome, that will never happen," Adhikari said.

The Kolkata Police promulgated prohibitory orders for 60 days from May 3 in parts of the city, even as security around the strongrooms was tightened with paramilitary forces deployed and armoured vehicles stationed.

"The CCTVs in several strongrooms are not functioning properly. We demand that the EC ensure proper monitoring," said senior TMC leader Shashi Panja.

Good news soon, says Stalin

CHENNAI, DHNS: With most exit polls predicting his government's return, DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday held consultations with party candidates from the northern districts. Stalin met candidates and district secretaries to review polling-day developments and assess the party's performance.

After a five-day vacation in Kodaikanal, Stalin had earlier consulted candidates from Chennai and its neighbouring districts before taking a break. Sources told *DH* that Stalin instructed leaders to remain vigilant at counting centres.

"The election results will be out in a couple of days, and I believe you will get good news," he said.

TVK election office set on fire

CHENNAI, DHNS: The TVK, led by actor-politician Vijay, on Friday alleged that an office set up by the party for the elections in the Srirangam constituency of Tiruchirappalli was torched by miscreants.

Police said the structure was gutted after miscreants set it ablaze around 2.30 am.

Srirangam TVK candidate Ramesh filed a complaint with the police and demanded immediate action against the culprits.

CCTV footage showed two persons near the office set up by a local TVK functionary.

The incident comes ahead of TVK chief Vijay's visit to the Cauvery Delta region on Saturday.

Cong's 'election bill' jibe after LPG hike

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Opposition on Friday pounded on the Narendra Modi government over the hike in the prices of commercial and 5-kg LPG cylinders, with top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi calling it an "election bill" and warning that the next strike would be on petrol and diesel.

Rahul said he had remarked earlier that the inflation heat would come after the Assembly elections, referring to the Rs 993 increase for 19-kg commercial cylinders — used in hotels and restaurants — to a record Rs 3,071.5.

The rate for 5-kg FTL cylinders — "Chhotu cylinders", which cater to the migrant population, among others — has been increased from Rs 549 to Rs 810.5.

"The biggest increase in a single day. This is the election bill. From February till now: Rs 1,380 increase -- a whopping 81% jump in just 3 months. Tea stalls, dhaba, hotels, bakeries, sweet shops - the burden on everyone's kitchen has increased. And this will affect your plate too. First strike on gas, next strike on petrol-diesel [sic]," Rahul posted on X.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the hike was due to a failure of the Centre's assurances on inflation and price stability, recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statements that prices would not be increased and inflation would be controlled.

"Today, I am seeing reality. It seems he is unable to do what he said," he said in Karnataka's Kalaburagi.

While Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said the hike would make food expensive for the general public, BRS working president K T Rama Rao called it a "May Day" gift by Modi.

AKHILESH YADAV
Samajwadi Party leader

"Cylinders don't get expensive; the 'roti-thali' does. This is known only by those who buy and eat it themselves, not by those who go and eat at others' places or steal from others' plates

Officers part of I-PAC raids awarded

NEW DELHI, PTI: Two ED officers who participated in the high-voltage and controversial raid against political consultancy firm I-PAC and one of its directors in Kolkata this January received an award for their "exceptional competence" on Friday.

Assistant directors Vikram Ahlawat and Prashant Chandila received their commendation certificates from Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary who officiated as the chief guest at the 70th ED Day event held here.

The raid on January 8 at the I-PAC office in Salt Lake and director Pratik Jain's house on Loudon Street grabbed headlines after Bengal chief minister descended on both locations with state police and administration officials and was seen taking away certain documents.

Revanth govt eyes land that Cong saved for farmers in 2023

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Around 50 km south of here, in the Rangareddy district, tribal farmers have been on a relay hunger strike for over 50 days, demanding that the state government leave their lands untouched.

Activists claim the Congress government is trying to acquire the same land on which it opposed the construction of the BRS' Pharma City before the 2023 polls.

At the heart of the dispute is Bharat Future City—an ambitious greenfield project positioned as the signature legacy of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's tenure.

Envisioned as Telangana's "fourth city" after Hyderabad, Secunderabad, and Cyberabad, the proposed development covers around 30,000 acres between the Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar highways in the Rangareddy district's Yacharam, Kandukur and Kadthal mandals.

The government envisaged it as India's first net-zero greenfield smart city, planned and governed by the Future City Development Authority.

The project's origins, however, are contested. "The land was earmarked for Hyderabad Pharma City under the previous BRS government, which had notified around 19,333 acres for pharma manufacturing units, a thermal power plant and a university," said Saraswathy Kavula, an activist working with local farmers.

"During the 2023 elections, Congress leaders marched alongside farmers and pledged to return acquired lands," she added.

MP govt orders probe into boat tragedy; toll at 9

JABALPUR/BHOPAL, PTI: The Madhya Pradesh government on Friday ordered a probe into the cruise boat accident at Bargi Dam, even as rescuers recovered five more bodies, taking the toll to nine.

Four boat passengers drowned on Thursday after their cruise boat capsized. "The rescue operation is still going on, and nine bodies have been recovered," Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said.

The MP government ordered a probe and banned the operation of such vessels. The tourism department will investigate the accident. PM Narendra Modi announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

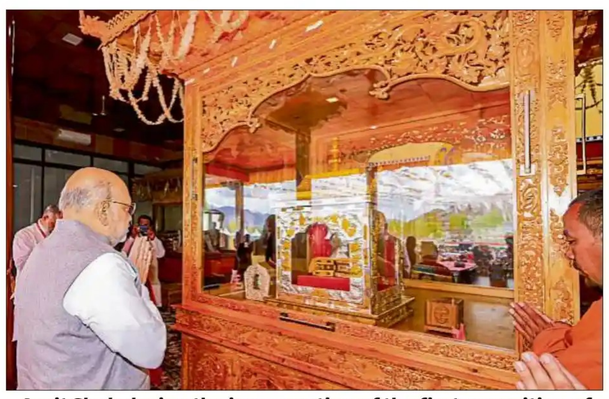
Shah inaugurates holy relics exposition

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday inaugurated the Sacred Holy Relics Exposition of Tathagata Buddha at Jivatsal in Leh, marking the first time the relics have been taken out of their permanent location for an exhibition within the country.

Calling the exhibition a "historic reunion", Amit Shah on Friday said that Ladakh was the land of "dharma". The exposition, timed to coincide with Buddha Purnima, will remain open till May 14.

Addressing a large gathering, Shah noted that when the relics were last brought to Ladakh 75 years ago, poor connectivity meant very few people could see them.

"At that time, these were difficult mountainous regions with no proper means of transport. There were no roads or accessible routes. Now, after 75 years, on the auspicious occasion of Vaishakh Purnima, when these relics have arrived again, I firmly believe that all followers of Buddhism in Ladakh and Kargil, as well as people of other faiths, will draw spiritual energy from these sacred relics and experience a sense of divinity," the home minister said.



Amit Shah during the inauguration of the first exposition of Lord Buddha's holy relics in Ladakh on Friday. PTI

Referring to the Dalai Lama, Shah described Ladakh as far more than a geographical region.

"This land is a living laboratory of Buddhist culture and compassion. On this land, knowledge has been preserved... India's civilisation has been conveying the message of peace for thousands of years," he said.

AAP govt's trust motion passes in Punjab Assembly

CHANDIGARH, PTI: The Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab won the Confidence Motion in the Punjab Assembly on Friday with AAP MLAs reaffirming that they stand like loyal soldiers of the party, a development which comes days after seven Rajya Sabha MPs of the Arvind Kejriwal-led party defected to the BJP.

With the opposition MLAs not present in the House when the motion was taken up, it was unanimously passed by a voice vote in their absence.

During the special session of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha here, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann moved the Confidence Motion, claiming that AAP's support base remains intact and will translate into a bigger mandate in 2027.

V2X MOVE

Trai paves way for connected vehicles

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Soon, cars could automatically receive real-time alerts about road accidents, poor road conditions, or dense fog from vehicles ahead, thanks to Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) communication technology.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on Thursday released a consultation paper on the regulatory framework for V2X, setting the stage for spectrum allocation and pricing norms to enable wireless communication between vehicles and their surroundings.

V2X technology enables vehicles to wirelessly exchange real-time data with other vehicles (V2V), road infrastructure (V2I), pedestrians (V2P), and mobile networks (V2N). This includes critical information such as location, speed, braking, and blind-spot alerts, enhancing road safety, easing traffic congestion, and supporting autonomous driving.

Spectrum allocation for V2X communication will also pave the way for the introduction of self-driving cars.

Union Road Transport Secretary V Umashankar had earlier said that vehicle-to-vehicle communication would alert drivers in real time to nearby vehicles' speed, location, acceleration, and braking, especially in low-visibility conditions.

On-board units (OBUs), similar to SIM cards, will be installed in vehicles to enable 360° direct communication without relying on mobile networks.

The technology is expected to be highly effective in preventing rear-end collisions with stationary vehicles and reducing large-scale pile-ups during dense fog.

According to official data, V2X will operate on the dedicated 5.9 GHz spectrum band. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has agreed to allocate 30 MHz (5875-5905 MHz) for initial C-V2X deployment, with an additional 20 MHz reserved for future Intelligent Transportation Systems.

India's 1st barrier-less multi-lane tolling system starts in Gujarat

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday announced the launch of India's first Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) barrier-less tolling system at the Chorayasi toll plaza on Gujarat's Surat-Bharuch section of National Highway (NH)-48.

This marks a significant development, as it allows vehicles to pass through toll plazas without stopping.

In a post on X, Gadkari said the "state-of-the-art system" uses advanced technologies such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) with AI analytics and RFID-based FASTag for seamless and automatic toll collection.

Describing the development as a major milestone, Gadkari said the introduction of MLFF represents a key step towards the digitisation of India's tolling ecosystem and modernisation of NHs in line with global standards.

SC grants pre-arrest bail to Khera in Assam case

Says individual liberty must not be imperilled by proceedings coloured by political rivalry

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has granted anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in a case registered against him for alleging that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife possessed multiple passports and undisclosed properties abroad.

A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Atul S Chandurkar said criminal process must be applied with objectivity and circumspection to ensure that individual liberty was not imperilled by proceedings that might be coloured by political rivalry.

In its April 30 order, released on Friday, the bench said: "We think that the allegations and counter-allegations, as apparent in the present case, prima facie appear to be politically motivated and seemingly influenced by such rivalry, rather than disclosing a situation warranting custodial interrogation, and the veracity of the allegations can be tested at trial."

SUPREME COURT

"We think that the allegations and counter-allegations, as apparent in the present case, prima facie appear to be politically motivated and seemingly influenced by such rivalry."

The court emphasised that the right to personal liberty was a cherished fundamental right, and any deprivation thereof must be justified on a higher threshold, particularly where the surrounding circumstances may indicate the presence of political overtones.

Dealing with his appeal against the Gauhati High Court's refusal of relief on April 24, the bench said the former's observations were not based on a correct appreciation of all the material placed on record and appeared erroneous, particularly in shifting the burden onto the accused.

In addition, without alleging any offence under Section 339 of BNS and merely based on a statement made by the Advocate General, observations regarding Section 339 of BNS did not appear correct, the court pointed out. Allowing the appeal, the court directed Khera to cooperate in the investigation and to appear before the police station as and when required and intimated. In its order, the bench ordered the appellant not to influence or tamper with any evidence during the pendency of the investigation or trial. It also directed him not to leave India without prior leave of the competent court.

The bench also clarified that the competent court would not be influenced by the observations and would proceed in matter in accordance with the law.

The bench said it was cognizant of the fact that an individual's personal liberty, as enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution, could not be put to jeopardy lightly.

NCB seizes 349 kg cocaine worth Rs 1,745 cr in Mumbai

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

In one of the biggest intelligence-led anti-narcotic operations in recent years, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) seized 349 kg of high-grade cocaine valued at Rs 1,745 crore, dismantling a suspected transnational drug trafficking network operating across Mumbai and its adjoining logistics corridor.

Codenamed Operation White Strike, the crackdown reportedly follows over six months of intelligence gathering and surveillance. Investigators are now pursuing leads to identify and apprehend the cartel's kingpin, handlers, financiers, and intended recipients of the consignment.

The action came days after the deportation of alleged drug trafficker Salim Dola, an associate of Pakistan-based fugitive Dawood Ibrahim, from Turkey. Officials said the scale of the seizure was significant, noting that India typically records annual cocaine seizures of 200-300 kg.

Acting on specific intelligence, multiple NCB teams carried out coordinated raids in the Kalamboli-Bhiwandi belt, a key warehousing and logistics hub in the Navi Mumbai-Thane region. The operation exposed a highly organised supply chain using commercial storage infrastructure and sophisticated concealment techniques to move contraband.

In the first operation, NCB officials intercepted a Maruti Suzuki Super Carry (CNG) vehicle near the KWC Warehousing Complex in Kalamboli and recovered 136 one-kg packets of cocaine.

Based on the interrogation of one person apprehended at the scene, officials traced a second consignment to a warehouse in Bhiwandi. A follow-up raid at a facility in Rehnal village led to the seizure of another 213 kg of cocaine, also in one-kg packets.

Preliminary findings indicate the cocaine was smuggled into India within the cavity of imported machinery. Each packet was wrapped in nine layers of polythene.

Relief for Rahul Gandhi after court rejects FIR plea

LUCKNOW, DHNS: In a major relief to former Congress president and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, the Allahabad High Court on Friday rejected a plea to register an FIR against him over his alleged "fighting the Indian state" remark, which had triggered a row.

A single-judge bench of Justice Vikram D Chauhan pronounced his decision in an open court while dismissing the petition, which had challenged the decision of a district court in Sambhal to reject a plea for registration of a criminal case against Rahul over the alleged remark on the ground that the petition lacked merit, among others.

The petition was filed by one Simarn Gupta, who had contended that the Congress leader's remark was "seditious" and against the integrity and sovereignty of the country.

The HC had earlier reserved its judgment after hearing the concerned parties.

According to the petitioner, Rahul had made the alleged statement while speaking at the inauguration of the Congress headquarters "Indira Bhavan" in Delhi in January last year.

The petition claimed that Rahul said his party's fight was now not confined to the BJP and the RSS, and that their fight was now against the "Indian state" along with the BJP and the RSS, as the latter had "captured" every institution in the country.

HC freezes Sunjay Kapur's assets amid inheritance dispute

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Delhi High Court has ordered preservation of the assets of late industrialist Sunjay Kapur, holding that all "suspicious circumstances" raised by his children from his marriage with actor Karisma Kapoor must be fully addressed by his third wife, Priya Kapur, before acceptance of his purported last will.

A bench of Justice Jyoti Singh passed the interim order on an application filed by Karisma's children to restrain Priya from alienating their father's assets, reportedly worth Rs 30,000 crore.

The interim application was filed in a suit by the children, challenging their late father's purported will of his assets.

"On examination of the material on record, I am of the considered view that all legitimate suspicious circumstances raised by the plaintiffs must be fully removed by defendant number one (Priya Kapur) before the document is accepted as the last will," the judge said.

"The plaintiffs have made out a prima facie case that the assets in question need to be protected and preserved pending disposal of the suit," she added. The court ordered that the equity shareholdings in the three Indian companies of the deceased cannot be altered and restrained the disposal of his personal effects, including artwork.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

HONEY, LOOK WHAT I FOUND: MY "HONEY DO" LIST FROM WHEN WE FIRST MOVED INTO OUR HOUSE!
OH?
WOW, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU STILL HAVEN'T COMPLETED MOST OF WHAT'S ON THIS LIST!
YOU MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT IT!
ACTUALLY, I THOUGHT I HID IT BETTER THAN THAT!

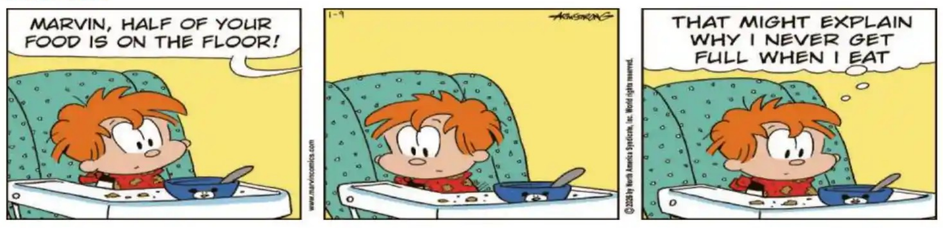
Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

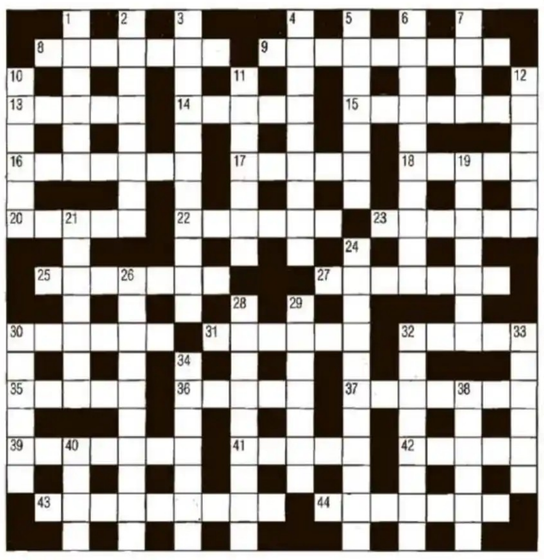
YOU ARE USELESS
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS BERATING, INSULTING AND ABUSING ME?
BECAUSE YOU NEED ENCOURAGEMENT, GUIDANCE AND NURTURING
GREG + MORT WALKER

Peanuts

Marvin



CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 4038



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
8 The bit left, I take over (7)
9 Should have got them off first, I reckoned (9)
13 As before, it's no loss! (5)
14 Model or green fur (5)
15 Second delivery (7)
16 A leak, you understand, to the paper (7)
17 A short time before Gaelic came to be (5)
18 He's OK! (5)
20 Still obtain when you pay for (5)
22 Scold for putting a sign outside (6)
23 Meeting to which some people may come late? (6)
25 Think it will give you a mirror image (7)
27 Looks at the ring again. It is ugly (7)
30 In a fury, I show spirit (6)
31 She had an eagle, almost, going out (6)
32 The silly old boy did the meting out (5)
35 Wants to be seen turning the key in it (5)
36 Play baseball with frequency (5)
37 Comes to again and feels pain (7)
39 Keep your distance (7)
41 Point to the strange palm tree (5)
42 Stop to get wood (5)
43 Was he sad he couldn't give the news to the country? (4,5)
44 Criticised for not having rung? (7)

DOWN
1 Only, you must admit, a cold comfort (6)
2 A column in the paper (8)
3 Waiting for you in your bedroom (4,7)
4 Young and green, date anyhow (6,3)
5 Lady Bert is pouring a drink for (7)
6 Very many without an anaesthetic (10)
7 Refreshment daily (4)
10 Can be mistaken for tickets (6)
11 Is it keen to help you enjoy your ham? (7)
12 A minor accusation (6)
19 No specific rank (7)
21 Say the time is no better than usual (7)
24 How the cattle were sold honestly? (2,4,5)
26 May, perhaps, jump at the last minute (4,6)
28 Furious, by ten a.m. I contrived to get though (2,1,6)
29 Could be soft on her, silly, silly sap! (7)
30 Cold when you gain victory with a final score (6)
32 Will get out a gun in retaliation - that's the snag (8)
33 When in the collapsing shed, makes a run for it (6)
34 Seems a paper's gone astray (7)
38 What keeps the cockney diner warm? (6)
40 Photograph of a tot (4)

ACROSS
8 Temperature scale (7)
9 Inappropriately jocular (9)
13 Lower leg joint (5)
14 Speedy (5)
15 Slight intimation (7)
16 Militaristic (7)
17 Secret store (5)
18 Body of water (5)
20 European language (5)
22 Handcart (6)
23 Alpine sport (6)
25 Priest's garment (7)
27 Individual (7)
30 Light sleep (6)
31 Miniature trees (6)
32 Moist (5)
35 Rough (5)
36 Cinema's lobby (5)
37 Big-headed person (7)
39 Washing place (7)
41 Refute (5)
42 Colourful plant (5)
43 Small burners (9)
44 Established set of words (7)

DOWN
1 Wide-mouthed cup (6)
2 Star-shaped character (8)
3 American football player (11)
4 Agile marsupial (9)
5 Unit of sound measurement (7)
6 Sneak thief (10)
7 Muslim mystic (4)
10 Insect (6)
11 Ghost (7)
12 Alcoholic drink (6)
19 Witty remark (7)
21 Stretchable (7)
24 Stomach upset (11)
26 Poor urban area (10)
28 Lie-detector (9)
29 Credit to particular origin (7)
30 Plump (6)
32 Gangsters (8)
33 Overly affectionate (6)
34 Quirky (7)
38 African antelope (6)
40 Incline at an angle (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12407

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Mouth 6, Hear-t 9, Right-ed 10, Elias 11, Age-NT 12, Trite 13, Inter-I'm 15, Pep 17, Deal 18, Legato 19, Chair 20, Alight 22, Far-E 24, So-L 25, B-raised 26, Spree 27, Tacit 28, Ai-me-d 29, Dearest 30, Never 31, Heels
DOWN: 2, On lin-e 3, T-R-ave-l 4, H-Is 5, Ch.-arm 6, Heather 7, Edge 8, Rennet 12, Tight 13, Id-e-as 14, T-amil 15, Par-AS 16, PO-red 18, L-it-re 19, Chap-ter 21, Locate 22, Finite 23, Re-ve-al 25, Be'er- y 26, Side 28, A-sh

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Stags 6, Roast 9, Audited 10, Grime 11, Silly 12, Colin 13, Insight 15, Vet 17, Neat 18, Define 19, Fired 20, Ration 22, Stud 24, Eve 25, Repeats 26, Lever 27, Cream 28, Depot 29, Caravan 30, Seven 31, Meets
DOWN: 2, Throne 3, Gambit 4, Sue 5, Pilot 6, Resided 7, Odin 8, Sullen 12, Chain 13, Inure 14, Saute 15, Vista 16, Tends 18, Defer 19, Foreman 21, Averse 22, Serene 23, Utmost 25, Relax 26, Lace 28, Dam

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ODHGU

VEMIO

IGNNNI

NCIVOE

We're narrowing it down.
Let's take another look across the street, and I think we'll know.
Are you ready to make an offer?
10/21
THEY HADN'T YET DECIDED WHICH NEW HOUSE TO BUY, BUT THEY WERE ---

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: STOOD PRINT VERIFY DOUBLE
Answer: When asked what your blood type is, sometimes you need to — BE POSITIVE

◆SU-DO-KU-6895◆

	7		2		4		9	6
						8		
	6			8	5	2	4	
6	1							
2		3				6		5
							2	1
	4	6	3	2			7	
		7						
3	2		5		9		6	

easy

SOLUTION TO 6894

9	7	8	5	2	6	3	4	1
3	2	6	4	8	1	7	9	5
1	4	5	3	9	7	6	8	2
5	1	2	6	4	9	8	7	3
6	9	3	8	7	2	1	5	4
7	8	4	1	3	5	2	6	9
4	6	1	2	5	8	9	3	7
8	5	7	9	1	3	4	2	6
2	3	9	7	6	4	5	1	8

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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G2 R1 A1 A1 T1 N1 V4 — Triple Word Score — RACK 1
E1 I1 H4 F4 T1 R1 E1 — Triple Word Score — RACK 2
N1 C3 T1 H4 N1 A1 E1 — Triple Word Score — RACK 3
I1 O1 C3 R1 H4 N1 C3 — Triple Word Score — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 230-240
by JUDD
FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YEATERDAY'S SOLUTION

S1 H4 I1 L1 L1 E1 D2 — RACK 1 = 61
A1 M3 P3 U1 L1 E1 S1 — RACK 2 = 63
V4 E1 R1 D2 I1 C3 T1 — RACK 3 = 67
S1 U1 P3 P3 O1 R1 T1 — RACK 4 = 61
JUDD'S TOTAL 252

PAR SCORE 165-175

HITORI-3349

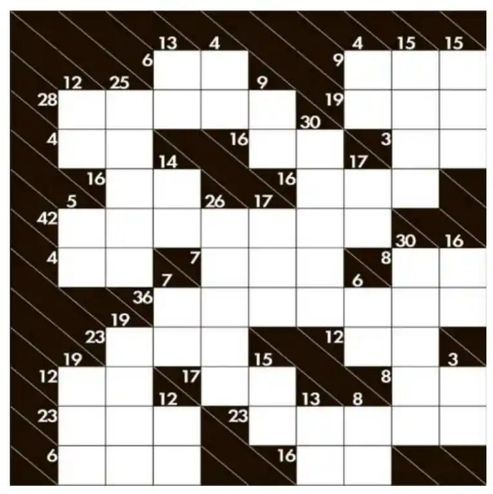
6	3	4	5	8	1	8	2
7	7	1	1	3	8	5	4
8	6	3	7	2	1	4	1
3	8	1	1	7	2	5	7
8	1	2	1	5	7	7	8
1	8	7	4	6	3	2	5
5	2	8	6	1	4	1	8
2	1	8	3	4	6	4	1

SOLUTION TO 3348

■	4	■	5	7	■	8	2
4	6	5	3	■	2	■	1
2	■	8	■	4	1	3	5
1	2	■	7	6	4	■	3
■	3	6	4	8	■	7	■
8	■	3	2	■	5	4	7
3	7	1	8	2	■	5	■
■	8	■	6	1	7	2	4

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3349



SOLUTION TO 3348

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3903

7			5			2		6
	■						5	
		■				■	7	3
	1		9		3	6		
				■	6			
	2		7		1		4	
5	9	■				■		
	■							9
	8							5

SOLUTION TO 3902

5	3	4	9	1	8	7	6	2
9	7	8	4	2	6	5	3	1
1	6	2	5	7	3	8	9	4
4	9	7	3	8	5	2	1	6
8	1	3	7	6	2	9	4	5
2	5	6	1	9	4	3	7	8
6	2	9	8	4	7	1	5	3
3	4	1	2	5	9	6	8	7
7	8	5	6	3	1	4	2	9

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

FAIR REPRESENTATION

Hindus urge inclusion of Indian history in South African textbooks

Dharma Sabha warns against 'erasure' of community's contributions

JOHANNESBURG, PTI

A leading Hindu organisation in South Africa has urged authorities not to "airbrush" the history of Indians in the country, calling for greater representation of the community's contributions in school textbooks currently under revision.

In an open letter, the South African Hindu Dharma Sabha (SAHDS) president Ram Maharaj said the history of Indians, despite the community being a minority, must be adequately reflected in curricula. "As far back as 1981, the SAHDS adopted a unanimous resolution at its inaugural National Hindu Convention in Durban, calling for substantial inclusion of Indian history in school curricula," he said.

"The history of Indians in South Africa cannot and must not be airbrushed away in history books. We demand that the current content on the history of Indians be at least doubled across all grades, because minorities matter," Maharaj said.

The current level of representation, he alleged, is "an affront" and a "blatant erasure" of the monumental contributions Indians have made to the building of South Africa. He recalled that Indians, since arriving as indentured labourers in 1860, have contributed across economic, cultural, political and social spheres in South Africa.

"To diminish this legacy in our textbooks is to diminish the truth itself," Maharaj said, adding that enhanced representation would promote interracial understanding, social cohesion and nation-building. He said greater inclusion of the community's struggles would also counter perceptions that Indians in South Africa had historically enjoyed privilege. "It must be recorded that our great indentured ancestors toiled tirelessly and lived in slave-like conditions, incessantly suffering from torture and trauma, deprivation and discrimination.

"However, down through the generations, Indians survived and thrived by prioritising educational advancement with a sense of vision and mission, turning adversity into advantage and doing more with less," the Hindu leader said.

The SAHDS has recommended that textbooks highlight the suffering and sacrifices of indentured Indians, as well as their role in the anti-apartheid struggle that led to the election of Nelson Mandela as the country's first democratically elected president. Maharaj noted that the struggle was initiated by the Natal Indian Congress, founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894, nearly two decades before the African National Congress was established.

He also called for recognition of Indian figures such as the Padavatan brothers and Valliamma, as well as philanthropists, including VN Naik, ML Sultan, Narend Pattundeen, AM Moola, RK Khan and HE Joosab, who helped establish schools and hospitals for the community.

Not satisfied with Iran's new proposal, says Trump

US prez cites unacceptable demands from Tehran

ISLAMABAD, AP/PTI

US President Donald Trump said on Friday he was "not satisfied" with Iran's latest proposal in negotiations to end the war between the countries, rejecting the plan almost as soon as it was delivered.

"They want to make a deal. I'm not satisfied with it, so we'll see what happens," Trump told reporters at the White House.

Iran handed over its latest proposal for negotiations to mediators in Pakistan on Thursday night, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported. The shaky three-week ceasefire between the US and Iran appears to be holding, though both countries have traded accusations of violations. Trump did not elaborate on what he saw as the proposal's shortcomings. "They're asking for things I can't agree to," he said.

Negotiations have continued by phone after Trump called off his envoys' trip to Pakistan last week, the president said. He expressed frustration with Iran's leadership, describing it as fractured. "It's very disjointed leadership," he said. "They all want to make a deal, but they're all messed up."

While the ceasefire has largely halted fighting in Iran, the US and Iran remain locked in a standoff over the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas passes in peacetime. A US Navy blockade preventing Iranian tankers from reaching the open sea has left Iran's economy reeling. The global economy is also under pressure as Iran maintains its chokehold on the strait. Trump earlier this week floated a new plan to reopen the critical passageway used by America's Gulf allies to export oil and gas.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a flurry of calls on Friday with several regional counterparts, including officials from Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Azerbaijan, to brief them on his country's latest initiatives to end the war, according to his social media posts.

European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas also spoke by phone with Araghchi on Friday. They discussed ongoing diplomatic efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and long-term security arrangements, Kallas' office said in a statement. She has also been in contact with the EU's Gulf partners.

Pakistani officials said efforts were continuing to ease tensions between Iran and the US.

US imposes new sanctions

The US imposed new sanctions on Friday on three Iranian foreign currency exchange firms, in an effort to target Tehran's "financial lifelines" in the West Asia war, AFP reports from Washington.

The US Treasury Department warned in a separate statement against paying a "toll" to Iran's government in exchange for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, saying this could trigger sanctions. Tehran has virtually blocked the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway for energy transit, since US-Israeli strikes on Iran from late February.

FIRST CELEBRATION

Participants attend a May Day rally organised by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, on the first May Day since it became a legal public holiday, in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday. REUTERS

US to impose 25% tariff on EU cars, trucks

Trump accuses bloc of not complying with trade deal

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

New vehicles of German car maker Mercedes Benz stand parked at the port of Bremerhaven, Germany. AFP FILE

President Donald Trump said on Friday that he will increase tariffs on cars and trucks from the European Union next week to 25%, a move that could jolt the world economy at a fragile moment.

Trump said in a post that the EU "is not complying with our fully agreed trade deal", though he did not elaborate on his objections.

Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had agreed to the trade deal last July. It set a 15% tariff on most goods.

Both the US and the EU had previously confirmed their commitment to preserving the trade framework, known as the Turnberry Agreement, named after Trump's golf course in Scotland.

However, the status of the 2025 deal was cast into doubt after the Supreme Court ruled this year that the Republican president lacked the legal authority to declare an economic emergency and impose tariffs on EU goods.

The initial agreement set a tariff ceiling of 15% on goods from the EU, but the Supreme Court ruling reduced that to 10% as the Trump administration launched a new set of import taxes under other laws. The administration is currently conducting investigations into trade imbalances and national security risks to impose a new tariff regime, which could ultimately put the agreement with the EU at risk of violation.

The EU had said it expected the bilateral deal would save European automakers about 500 million to 600 million euros (USD585 million to USD700 million) a month. The value of EU-US trade in goods and services amounted to 1.7 trillion euros (USD2 trillion) in 2024, or an average of 4.6 billion euros a day, according to EU statistics agency Eurostat.

"A deal is a deal," the European Commission said in February after the Supreme Court ruling. "As the United States' largest trading partner, the EU expects the US to honour its commitments set out in the joint statement, just as the EU stands by its commitments. EU products must continue to benefit from the most competitive treatment, with no increases in tariffs beyond the clear and all-inclusive ceiling previously agreed."

Pentagon signs classified AI deals with tech giants

WASHINGTON, AFP: The Pentagon on Friday announced agreements with seven leading artificial intelligence companies to deploy their technology on classified military networks, a move that pointedly excludes Anthropic amid its ongoing dispute with the Defense Department.

SpaceX, OpenAI, Google, Nvidia, Reflection, Microsoft and Amazon Web Services will be integrated into the Defense Department's most sensitive classified systems, used for mission planning, weapons targeting and other purposes, according to a statement.

The statement did not mention Anthropic, which is caught up in a dispute with the Pentagon over guardrails governing how the military could use its AI tools.

The US military currently uses Anthropic's AI but is phasing it out after the company objected to its technology being used for mass domestic surveillance or to directly control lethal autonomous weapons.

The Pentagon subsequently labelled the AI start-up a supply-chain risk earlier this year, barring its use by the US military and its contractors.

URBAN COLLAPSE

Mexico City sinking at alarming rate

MEXICO CITY, AP/PTI

Mexico City is sinking by nearly 25 centimetres a year, according to new satellite imagery released this week by Nasa, making it one of the world's fastest-subsiding metropolises.

One of the world's most sprawling and populated urban areas, covering 7,800 square kilometres and home to some 22 million people, the Mexican capital and surrounding cities were built atop an ancient lake bed.

Many downtown streets were once canals, a tradition that continues in the rural fringes. Extensive groundwater pumping and urban development have dramatically shrunk the aquifer, meaning that Mexico City has been sinking for more than a century, leaving many monuments and older buildings — like the Metropolitan Cathedral, where construction began in 1573 — visibly tilted to one side. The contracting aquifer has also contributed to a chronic water crisis that is only expected to worsen.

"It damages part of the critical infrastructure of Mexico City, such as the subway, the drainage system, the drinking water system, housing and streets," said Enrique Cabral, a researcher studying geophysics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. "It's a very big problem."

Mexico City is sinking so fast that the subsidence can be spotted from space.

In some areas, it is happening at an average rate of 2 centimetres a month, according to Nasa's newly released report, such as at the main airport and the iconic monument commonly known as the Angel of Independence.

Overall, that means a yearly subsidence rate of about 24 centimetres.

Ukraine strikes Russian oil terminal again

KYIV, AP/PTI: Ukrainian forces struck an oil terminal in the Russian Black Sea city of Tuapse, Ukraine's General Staff said on Friday, marking the fourth attack targeting the region's oil infrastructure in just over two weeks.

Explosions and a fire were recorded on the premises of local oil infrastructure, the General Staff said in a statement. Local officials in Russia said a Ukrainian drone attack sparked the blaze and that no casualties were reported.

The facility had been hit previously on April 16, April 20 and April 28. Regional governor Veniamin Kondratyev said a fire at the city's oil refinery had also been extinguished on Thursday, less than 24 hours before the latest strike.

Rescuers work at the site of a Russian drone strike in Ternopil, Ukraine, on Friday. REUTERS

Meanwhile, Russian attacks continued to strike Ukraine. Russia attacked the western Ukrainian city of Ternopil with more than 50 drones on Friday, according to mayor Serhii Nadal. Hits were recorded at industrial facilities and infrastructure, he said. At least 10 people were wounded, he added, while some neighbourhoods remain without electricity as a result of the mass attack.

Two multi-storey residential buildings and port infrastructure in Odesa were damaged after Russian forces launched another overnight drone attack on the southern region, local authorities said. As a result of the strikes, an apartment in a 16-storey building was destroyed and the roof caught fire. In another high-rise residential building, a fire engulfed the 12th floor.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Russian teacher Pavel Talankin hoists his Oscar for Best Documentary Feature Film for "Mr Nobody Against Putin" at the 98th Annual Academy Awards Governors Ball in Hollywood. AFP FILE

Missing Oscars statuette for 'Mr Nobody Against Putin' found

An Oscar statuette belonging to a Russian director who won best documentary this year for "Mr Nobody Against Putin" has been found after going missing on a flight from New York to Germany, , Reuters reports from London.

Pavel Talankin, the director, had been forced to check the award into hold luggage before boarding a flight from John F Kennedy International Airport to Frankfurt, according to a post by his co-director, David Borenstein, on Instagram. Transportation Security Administration agents had told Talankin that the 3.8 kg statuette posed a potential security threat, Borenstein said, adding that the award then went missing. "We can confirm that the Oscar statuette has now been located and is safely in our care in Frankfurt. We are in direct contact with the guest to arrange its personal return as quickly as possible," a spokesperson for German airline Lufthansa said on Friday.

"We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused and have apologised to the owner. The careful and secure handling of our guests' belongings is of the utmost importance to us. An internal review of the circumstances is ongoing."

China to expand space station

China plans to expand its low-Earth orbiting space station, potentially more than doubling its size, as the rival International Space Station is set to be phased out by 2031, PTI reports from Beijing.

Currently, China's Tiangong and the ISS — a collaborative project involving Nasa along with the space agencies of Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada — are in orbit. Nasa plans to retire the ISS, the largest human-made structure in space, which has served as a continuously occupied laboratory orbiting Earth. This will leave the Chinese space station as the only one of its kind in orbit. China built its space station after it was excluded from the ISS over concerns that its space programme is run by the People's Liberation Army.

People watch as construction equipment is used to demolish squatter settlements near the Bagmati River in Kathmandu on Friday. AFP

Nepal govt on demolition spree

Nepal's government has come under attack from opposition parties after it intensified a campaign to demolish illegal structures built by landless settlers in Kathmandu and other areas, PTI reports from Kathmandu.

On Sunday, at least 1,200 temporary and permanent structures built illegally in two of Nepal's prime districts along the banks of the Bagmati and Manahara rivers were demolished during a massive drive. Local authorities on Friday continued the operation by dismantling hundreds of structures built on the banks of the Bagmati and Bishnumati rivers in the Balkhu, Teku and Balaju areas on the outskirts of Kathmandu, saying the settlements were constructed illegally. The Balendra Shah-led government has faced criticism from leaders of various opposition parties over the move.

'Punisher' creator Conway dies

Gerry Conway, a comic book writer for DC and Marvel who infuriated fans in 1973 by killing off Spider-Man's love interest and then thrilled them later the same year by helping to create the Punisher, a violent, ambivalent and enduring antihero, died on Sunday in Thousand Oaks, California, at the age of 73, NYT News Service reports.

His wife, Laura Conway, said the cause was pancreatic cancer. The demise of Gwen Stacy — an early romantic interest of Peter Parker (Spider-Man's alter ego) who plummets off a New York City bridge in Issue No 121 of The Amazing Spider-Man — began with an idea from comic book artist John Romita Sr. To keep readers engaged, Romita suggested that the Spider-Man creative team should kill off a supporting character.

Actress Emily Blunt and actor Stanley Tucci pose for photos at their adjoining stars during their Walk of Fame star ceremony in Hollywood on Thursday. AFP

Biz Bytes

'Govt to sustain capex push despite stress'

NEW DELHI, PTI: The government will proceed with the planned Rs 12.22 lakh crore capital expenditure in the current fiscal to maintain the growth momentum, despite the fiscal stress arising from the ongoing West Asia conflict, a senior official said on Friday.

Expenditure Secretary V Vualnam said the upcoming few quarters and the coming year would possibly have a "lot of stress points". Tax buoyancy could be impacted by a cut in excise duties on petrol and diesel brought about in late March. He said highways, railways, shipping, ports, and urban development sectors would be the focus areas for the FY27 capex.

Ravi assumes charge as CMD of HAL

BENGALURU, PTI: State-run aerospace behemoth HAL on Friday said Ravi K has assumed charge as the 22nd Chairman and Managing Director of the company. He succeeds DK Sunil, who superannuated on April 30.

Ravi brings over 30 years of experience across various sectors such as A&D, manufacturing and electronics, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) said in a release.

Prior to this, he was the Director (Operations) at HAL, where he led strategic planning and played a key role in securing HAL's Maharatna status.

'Students must use AI tools, understand limitations too'

BENGALURU, DHNS: There has to be a paradigm shift in how we build skills among students, and this is occurring from product to process, said Gurucharan Gollerkeri, Executive Director and Chief Strategy Officer, Gokula Education Foundation (Medical).

Gollerkeri highlighted the need to train students to use all possible AI tools, but at the same time, they also need to understand that these tools have limitations. "That's why the core teaching becomes very important," he said.

Gokula Education Foundation (Medical), which manages the Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Ramaiah Medical College, and the Ramaiah Memorial Hospital, is launching Ramaiah Institute of Science and Management (RISM), a deemed-to-be university in Bengaluru in partnership with University at Albany, State University of New York.

GST revenue hits record high of Rs 2.43 L cr in April despite war

Import-linked GST collection surges by 26% during month

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Gross revenue collection from goods and services tax (GST) rose to a record high of Rs 2.43 lakh crore in April, registering an 8.7% year-on-year growth, led by strong import-linked revenues despite the West Asia-related geopolitical headwinds, official data showed on Friday.

Gross GST receipts from imports surged by 25.8% to Rs 57,580 crore in April, while gross domestic GST collections recorded a comparatively moderate 4.3% year-on-year growth to reach Rs 1.85 lakh crore.

After accounting for refunds, net GST collections in the first month of the current financial year stood at Rs 2.11 lakh crore, which is 7.3% higher than the same month last year, as per data released by the Union Finance Ministry.

The April 2026 GST collection is the highest-ever monthly mop-up. The previous high was Rs 2.37 lakh crore recorded in April 2025. The indirect tax revenue collections are typically strong in April due to year-end book reconciliations by businesses in March.

Mahesh Jaising, Partner & Indirect Tax Leader, Deloitte India, said the nearly 26% growth in import-linked GST revenue reflects sustained trade flows even in a volatile external environment.

"Equally important is the steady performance of domestic GST revenues, which suggests that GST 2.0-led rate rationalisation and simplification measures are beginning to support consumption and demand without materially eroding the tax base," he added.

The net GST revenue from imports surged 42.9%, significantly outpacing the marginal 0.3% rise in net domestic collections.

Refunds increased by about 19% year-on-year, driven largely by higher domestic refunds.

Vivek Jalan, Partner, Tax Connect Advisory Services, said the robust revenue in April was powered by a 42.9% jump in net customs GST collections, reflecting higher import costs amid global supply-chain disruptions and war-driven commodity movements.

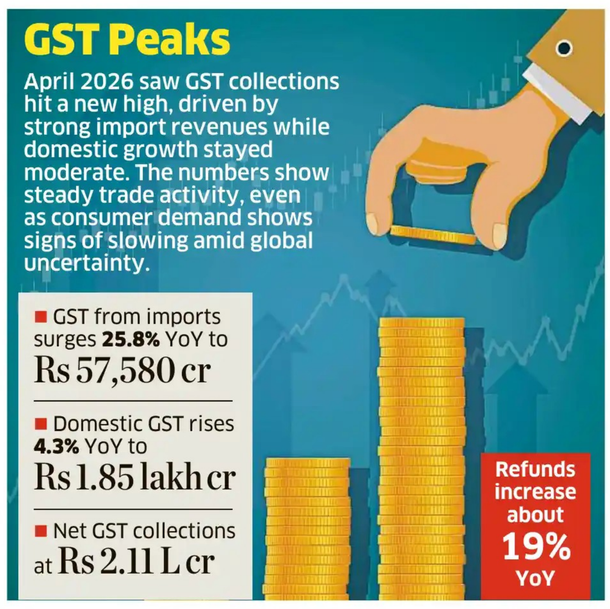
"A major compliance shift also shaped April's inflows: the recalibration of ITC (input tax credit) set-off sequencing on the GST portal, following withdrawal of the February 2026 advisory that had temporarily allowed IGST liability to be set off first against SGST credit," Jalan said.

"Post GST 2.0, a steady 7-8% monthly growth seems to be emerging as the norm, which is broadly in line with budget estimates," said Pratik Jain, Partner, Price Waterhouse & Co LLP.

"Notably, growth in import-led revenues continues to outpace domestic transactions, which could indicate some softness in consumption — possibly reflecting a moderation in discretionary spending amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainties," Jain said.

State-wise data showed a mixed trend. Large states such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat continue to lead revenue collection. Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala and Telangana posted strong increases, while Bihar, Assam, West Bengal and Jharkhand saw declines in pre-settlement revenues.

"Several large manufacturing and consuming states have reported low single-digit growth, including Gujarat at 3% and Maharashtra, Karnataka and Haryana at 5% — this requires deeper sectoral analysis," said MS Mani, Partner, Deloitte India.


GST Peaks
April 2026 saw GST collections hit a new high, driven by strong import revenues while domestic growth stayed moderate. The numbers show steady trade activity, even as consumer demand shows signs of slowing amid global uncertainty.
GST from imports surges 25.8% YoY to Rs 57,580 cr
Domestic GST rises 4.3% YoY to Rs 1.85 lakh cr
Net GST collections at Rs 2.11 L cr
Refunds increase about 19% YoY

Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Kia post record sales in April

Industry benefiting from tailwinds of GST 2.0 from H2 of the last fiscal

NEW DELHI, DHNS & PTI

The Indian automobile sector opened the 2026-27 financial year on a strong footing, with most manufacturers reporting healthy year-on-year growth in April.

The industry continued to benefit from the tailwinds of GST 2.0 carried forward from the second half of last fiscal, along with repo rate cut and income tax benefit, Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Partho Banerjee said.

The country's largest carmaker sold 2.39 lakh vehicles in April, the highest number for a month. The company recorded domestic sales of over 1.9 lakh units, with 34% year-on-year growth. The previous best was 1.82 lakh units in December 2025.

"We are starting this year with a big bang. Small cars have contributed significantly to this growth," Banerjee told *PTI*.

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles posted a 31.1% year-on-year growth in sales at 59,701 units. This includes 59,000 units for the domestic market. The EV segment registered 72.1% surge to 9,150 units during the month.

Hyundai Motor India reported its highest-ever monthly domestic sales of 51,902 units in April, registering a year-on-year growth of 17%.

"We have opened the new financial year on a strong note, carrying forward the momentum built in recent months into April 2026," Hyundai Motor India Ltd MD and CEO Tarun Garg said.

Mahindra & Mahindra said its overall sales jumped by 14% year-on-year to 94,627 units. Its CEO, Automotive Division, Nalinikanth Gollagunta, stated that the company has started the new fiscal year 2026-27 "on a positive note in April".

Kia India recorded its highest-ever April sales with 27,286 units, registering a growth of 16% year-on-year. "Our highest-ever April performance builds on the steady growth we have seen over the past several months. This momentum is being led by the new Seltos, with Sonet, Carens, and Clavis continuing to strengthen our presence across key segments through ongoing enhancements," Kia India Senior Vice-President, Sales & Marketing, Atul Sood said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported domestic sales of 30,159 units, compared to 24,833 units in April 2025, up 21%.

"Our sales performance in April 2026 reflects steady and sustained progress, driven by a strong focus on customer centricity, product excellence and disciplined execution across markets," TKM Executive Vice-President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business, Sabari Manohar said.

Nissan Motor India said its domestic sales stood at 3,203 units.

No change in domestic ATF; int'l airlines face 5% hike

NEW DELHI, PTI

Aviation fuel prices for domestic airlines were left unchanged on Friday, providing stability for local carriers and sparing flyers any immediate cost increase.

However, a month after jet fuel prices for them were more than doubled, state-owned oil firms hiked aviation turbine fuel (ATF) rates for international airlines by $76.55 per kl, or 5.33%, to $1,511.86 per kl.

The ATF for domestic airlines will continue to be priced at Rs 1,04,927.18 per kl, as state-owned oil companies have decided to absorb the rise in global fuel prices to protect airlines and consumers.

Even on April 1, when rates for international carriers were more than doubled to $1,435.31 per kl, oil companies had increased jet fuel price for domestic airlines by 25%, adopting a calibrated approach in passing on the increase that had become necessary because of the West Asia war-linked surge in international energy prices.

The decisions on ATF by state-owned oil companies will come as a relief to domestic carriers like Air India, IndiGo, and SpiceJet, who in the run-up to the scheduled monthly revision warned of the sector being under "extreme stress".

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA) had in a letter to the government stated that "unprecedented increase in ATF cost has moved the airline's operation from 30-40% to 55-60%, creating completely non-operatable conditions for airlines.

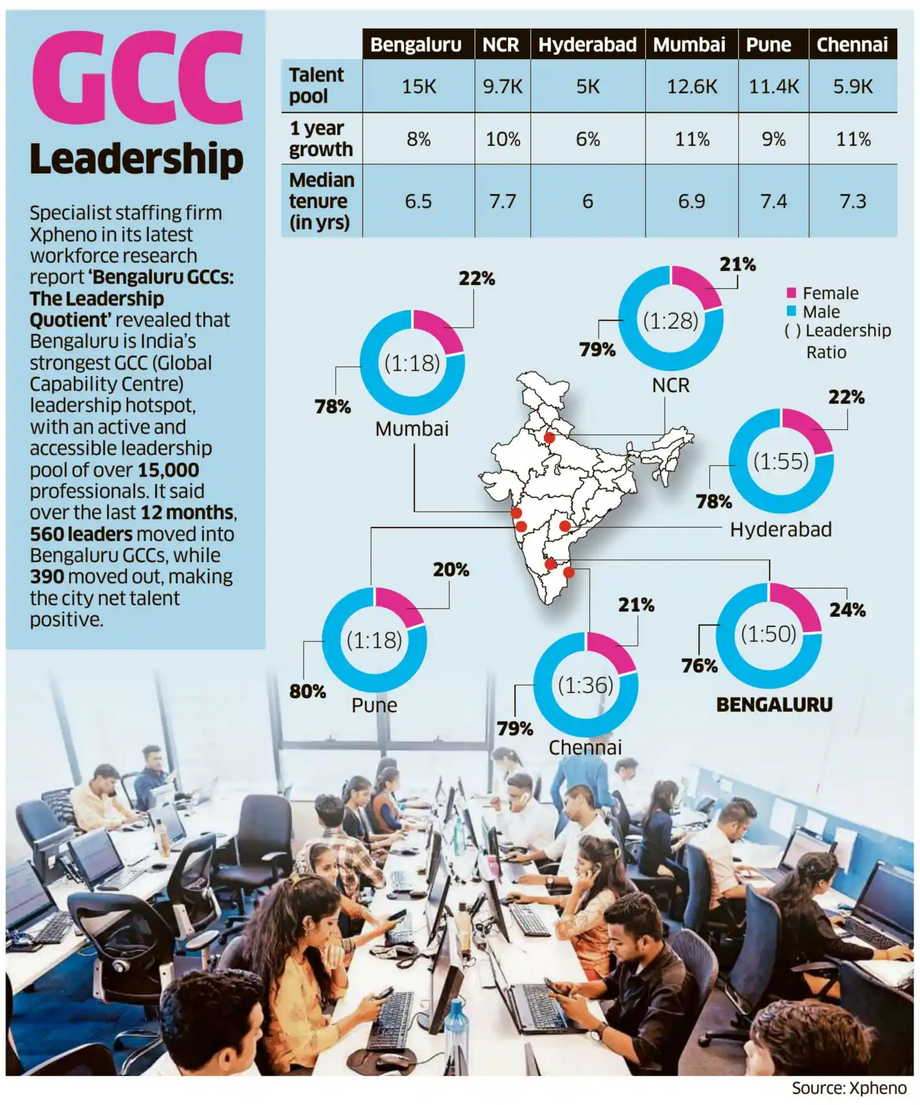
Prices vary from state to state depending on local taxes like VAT.

Global oil prices have shot up almost 50% after the war in West Asia disrupted energy supply chains. Airlines across the world are facing disruptions amid a tightening jet fuel supply, triggered by the ongoing war in the region. The Strait of Hormuz — a critical conduit for global energy flows — remains effectively closed as the conflict enters its third month, further straining fuel availability and supply chains.

In India, jet fuel prices were deregulated more than two decades ago, and since then, the rates have been aligned with benchmark international prices, as per a written understanding with the airlines.

But since the West Asia war-induced surge in global energy prices warranted the steepest increase ever to be made in ATF prices, the government and state-owned oil companies decided to adopt a calibrated approach, industry sources said.

While foreign airlines and other carriers would pay market rates, prices for domestic airlines have been moderated, they said.


GCC Leadership
Specialist staffing firm Xpheno in its latest workforce research report 'Bengaluru GCCs: The Leadership Quotient' revealed that Bengaluru is India's strongest GCC (Global Capability Centre) leadership hotspot, with an active and accessible leadership pool of over 15,000 professionals. It said over the last 12 months, 560 leaders moved into Bengaluru GCCs, while 390 moved out, making the city net talent positive.
Bengaluru | NCR | Hyderabad | Mumbai | Pune | Chennai
Talent pool: 15K | 9.7K | 5K | 12.6K | 11.4K | 5.9K
1 year growth: 8% | 10% | 6% | 11% | 9% | 11%
Median tenure (in yrs): 6.5 | 7.7 | 6 | 6.9 | 7.4 | 7.3
Female
Male
( ) Leadership Ratio
(1:18) 78% 22% Mumbai
(1:28) 79% 21% NCR
(1:55) 78% 22% Hyderabad
(1:18) 80% 20% Pune
(1:36) 79% 21% Chennai
(1:50) 76% 24% BENGALURU

Source: Xpheno

State launches CoE for space tech in B'luru

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka has launched India's first state-led Centre of Excellence for Space Technology (CoE SpaceTech Foundation) in Bengaluru. IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge inaugurated the centre, which was established by the state government through the Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society in collaboration with SIA-India.

Kharge said, "With the launch of this Centre of Excellence for Space Technology, we are extending that leadership into one of the most strategic sectors of the future. Our focus is not just on advancing research, but on creating an ecosystem where innovation can translate into real-world applications, economic growth, and high-quality jobs."

The CoE SpaceTech Foundation has been established to drive advanced research and innovation in space technologies, industry-aligned training and talent development, start-up incubation and ecosystem building and cross-sector applications of space technologies.

The centre also formalised multiple MoUs to strengthen its ecosystem approach, including an MoU with Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), which is focused on collaborative research in space biology, student training and internships, industry engagement with space and biotechnology startups, international workshops in microgravity research, and the establishment of a space bio research cluster.

Excited about India, recorded double-digit growth: Apple CEO

NEW DELHI, PTI: Apple CEO Tim Cook on Friday said he is delighted and excited about India as the company continues to record double-digit growth in the country.

Tim Cook

During Apple's earnings call for the second quarter of fiscal 2026, which ended March 28, Cook said India is the second-largest smartphone market in the world, and the third-largest PC market, and despite doing very well, Apple still has a modest share, which speaks about the opportunity the country has.

"I'm over the moon excited about India," Cook said in response to an analyst's question on the country.

The longest-serving CEO of Apple, Cook, is set to transition out of his position on September 1. He will be succeeded by John Ternus on the same date.

Cook said India offers a huge opportunity for Apple.

"It's the second-largest smartphone market in the world and the third-largest PC market, and despite doing extremely well there for quite some time, we still have a modest share. And so I think that really speaks to the opportunity that we have," he said.

Cook added that there are a lot of people moving into the middle-class in India.

"We have got some great products for them both currently and coming. The majority of customers in all of our categories, from the iPhone to the Mac to the iPad to the Watch, are new to that product there. And so it speaks very well to growing the installed base there," he said.

The net income of Apple in the reported quarter increased by about 19.36% to $29.57 billion from $24.78 billion.

Apple during the reported quarter posted a 17% increase in revenue to $111.2 billion on a year-over-year basis from $95.35 billion in the March 2025 quarter.

iPhone revenue increased by 22% on a YoY basis to $57 billion.

AUTO MENU

Next big thing for convenience: Food ordering AI assistants?

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Will AI chat interfaces become the new front door for commerce? Will they shift the demand away from apps such as Zomato? No, says Eternal Founder Deepinder Goyal. According to him, general-purpose interfaces are suitable for general-purpose queries, but they are inadequate for complex, high-frequency, and habitual transactions. "Ordering food involves browsing menus, comparing restaurants, ratings and delivery times, substituting items and tracking orders in real time," he said.

Though according to Goyal, chat interfaces will not displace food delivery, there is significant disruption when it comes to the use of AI. Delivery platforms have evolved beyond basic automation and are now leveraging agentic commerce. Understanding a user's behaviour, an AI agent can itself compare and order food instead of a user browsing for the best rates and options.

Recently, at an event in Bengaluru, Swiggy CTO Madhusudhan Rao said that soon agents will do all the searching for customers and order food according to their preferences.

Will AI assistants manage your food ordering in future? "AI assistants will start playing a role, but not fully replace user control. They can help with repeat orders, recommendations, and decision-making based on past behaviour. Over time, they may handle routine use cases like reordering meals or suggesting options. But food is still a personal and contextual choice, so users will continue to stay involved in the final decision," said Madhav Kasturia, Founder and CEO, Zippee, a quick commerce logistics startup.

Kasturia said AI is already being

used across the stack, from demand prediction and inventory planning to routing and delivery efficiency. Going forward, it will improve personalisation, make operations more efficient, and help platforms manage supply and demand better. "The biggest impact will be in reducing friction, making the entire experience faster, more predictable, and reliable," he added.

Dravisha Katoch, Investor, Antler India, said AI is already core to food delivery. The visible layer is search, recommendations, and dynamic pricing. The invisible layer is where the real work happens — rider supply-demand modelling at peak hours, geo-analytics on which restaurants push discounts, inventory and material management for cloud kitchens, fraud detection, and ETA prediction.

Hyper-personalised menus — your homescreen rebuilt every time you open the app; voice and agent-led ordering; real-time supply matching — riders, restaurants, kitchens, all optimised live; and AI for SMB restaurants, are something that Katoch is watching out for.

"Food delivery is one of the cleanest examples of an industry where AI is the substrate. The companies that win the next decade will treat data and prediction as one of their core products," he said.

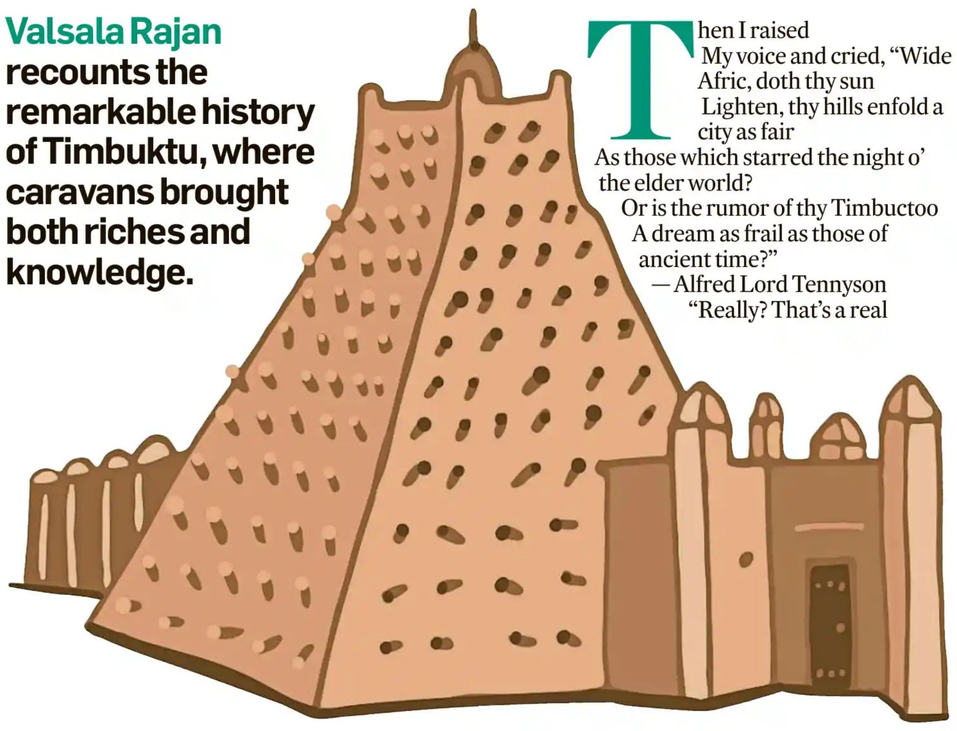
In a letter to shareholders, Goyal also explained that they are one of the largest deployers of AI in India. "Demand prediction, route optimisation, supply-chain management, customer experience, fraud detection, catalogue quality, and partner support already use AI across our platforms. These systems are trained on billions of real interactions, where the cost of getting something wrong — a late delivery, wrong order, failed refund, unavailable item — is immediate and measurable. But the more important question is not how AI helps us reduce costs. That is useful, but not enough. The sharper question we ask ourselves is: how does AI expand the market?" he said.

According to Goyal, for customers, conversational interfaces let them express intent in full sentences rather than two-word search queries. For delivery partners, AI will make onboarding, training, and day-to-day guidance conversational and personalised, thereby expanding the earning opportunity to people who may otherwise struggle with app flows, language, documentation, or lack of confidence.

"For restaurant partners and sellers, AI will make high-quality business guidance available from day one — the kind of growth-guidance that historically our teams could provide to a limited set of partners. AI lets us serve people and businesses that were previously too hard, too small, too fragmented, or too operationally expensive to serve well. Operational efficiency will follow, but it is not the ambition. Our moat remains the physical world. AI makes that moat wider by allowing more of India to participate in it," he explained.

Where gold met MANUSCRIPTS

Valsala Rajan recounts the remarkable history of Timbuktu, where caravans brought both riches and knowledge.



Then I raised
My voice and cried, "Wide
Afric, doth thy sun
Lighten, thy hills enfold a
city as fair
As those which starred the night o' the elder world?
Or is the rumor of thy Timbuctoo
A dream as frail as those of ancient time?"
— Alfred Lord Tennyson

"Really? That's a real place?" I hear some of you ask. Timbuktu has become a synonym for a place far beyond the pale of human civilisation. For example, when I moved to a somewhat 'remote' (no longer so!) location in Bengaluru, a friend of mine asked why I'd moved to Timbuktu.

Indeed, for most of my childhood, I thought it was an entirely fictional place, maybe it's the name, but it turns out I was very wrong.

Timbuktu is a town in the West African country of Mali and was an important trading post of the Mali Empire for all those caravans that crossed the Sahara in the 15th and 16th centuries. For a city to grow, first comes water, and then comes trade. Situated near the great bend of the Niger River, it became a meeting point for caravans crossing the Sahara from North Africa and traders moving inland from West Africa.

Legend has it that the city was named after an old woman who looked after the camp while the nomadic Tuareg roamed the Sahara. Timbuktu, or Buctoo, meant "mother with a large navel". Timbuktu was a crucial meeting point for African and Arab cultures. It was known as an exchange point for rock salt from the Saharan mines, which was traded for gold and ivory.

Timbuktu grew into a centre of Islamic culture, and the greatest mosques in western Africa were built there by Mali emperors: the Djingareyber Mosque was built in the 14th century; the Sankore Mosque was a major centre of learning that attracted thousands of students and scholars and held more books than most European libraries at the time. Students studied theology, law, astronomy, mathematics, and literature. Lessons were often conducted in open courtyards, under the shade of mud-brick walls that absorbed the desert heat.

Mansa Musa, the 14th-century ruler of the Mali Empire, is believed to be one of the richest figures in history.

In the early 15th century, the Tuareg nomads recaptured the city for a while, and in spite of the plundering, trade and learning flourished. About 25,000 scholars, a quarter of the city's population, and all graduates of the great universities of Egypt and Mecca, lived there. The Ahmed Baba Institute in Timbuktu has many ancient manuscripts dating from the 14th to 16th centuries, covering topics from Islamic law and medicine to astronomy.

The Songhai, who lived along the Niger River, conquered Timbuktu in 1468. Some of their rulers used the intellectual elite as their legal and moral counsellors. Merchants from all over North Africa continued to gather there to trade until the end of the 16th century, when decline set in. Timbuktu was captured by the French in 1894. European explorers came seeking gold. They found, instead, a remarkable treasure trove of intellectual property. Thousands of handwritten texts, on subjects ranging from Islamic jurisprudence and medicine to poetry and astronomy, were preserved in private libraries across the city. In Timbuktu, knowledge was carefully recorded and passed from generation to generation in ink that has survived centuries of dust and uncertainty.

In 1960, Timbuktu became part of the independent Republic of Mali. And in 1988, it became a designated World Heritage Site.

Buildings are made from banco, a mixture of earth and water, shaped into thick walls that insulate against the desert's extremes. Each year, after the rains, the community comes together to repair and replaster the structures. Timbuktu is ever-changing, working with the desert winds that constantly shift the boundaries of the city.

Timbuktu is not the end of the world as literature and myth would have it. It is, and always has been, a busy part of the world connected by trade routes, by ideas, and by the shared human desire to learn, to build, and to endure. Timbuktu faces challenges that are both ancient and modern. Climate change intensifies the desert's encroachment. Political instability has, at times, isolated the city. Tourism, which once brought curious travellers chasing the romance of its name, has dwindled. But Timbuktu lives on.

2 DIY experiments using ICE

... and other household articles

Frozen treasure

Ingredients needed
- Plastic bowl or container
- Water
- Small waterproof toys, beads, buttons, or coins
- Warm water
- Spoon
- Dropper or teaspoon
- Tray or plate

Method
1) Place small toys such or beads inside a plastic bowl. Pour water until the objects are covered. Keep it in the freezer overnight.
2) Take the frozen bowl out and gently remove the solid ice block. Place it on a tray.
3) Look through the ice and find where the treasures are trapped.
4) Using a spoon or dropper, slowly pour warm water over the ice block, especially where the toys can be seen.
5) As the ice begins to melt and crack, you can use a spoon to gently loosen the objects and pull them out.

Science behind it
Ice melts when it receives heat. Warm water gives heat to the ice, causing it to change from solid to liquid and release the trapped objects.

Ice tower

Ingredients needed
- 5 to 6 ice cubes
- 1 small plate or tray
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Bowl of cold water
- Dropper or teaspoon
- Tissue cloth

Method
1) Take 5 to 6 ice cubes out of the freezer and place them on a plate or tray.
2) Make sure they are not melting too much.
3) Choose one ice cube and place it flat on the plate. This will be the bottom block of your tower.
4) Sprinkle a very tiny pinch of salt on the top surface of the first ice cube. Do not add too much. Just a few grains are enough.
5) Using a spoon or dropper, place one small drop of cold water over the salted area.
6) Quickly place a second ice cube over the first one where the salt and water were added.
7) Press it gently with your fingers for about 10 to 15 seconds.
8) Slowly remove your fingers. You will notice that both ice cubes have stuck together.
9) Now you have a two-cube tower. Repeat the process.
10) Instead of stacking upward, one can also stick cubes side by side to make arches or small tunnels.

Science behind it
Salt causes the outer layer of ice to melt for a moment. Since the cubes are extremely cold, the melted water freezes again instantly when the cubes are pressed together.

Happy memories

Open Sesame readers write verses about their happy memories

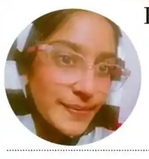
Memory waves

The only way to revisit our past is through our memory.
Every joy, every mistake, every moment
we've lived is quietly stored within us.
Sometimes, those memories return like a wave in an ocean,
sudden, powerful, and impossible to ignore.
They pull us in, making us relive feelings we thought
had faded, keeping us there for a while.
And when we try to hold onto them, our mind
replays them again and again, until we realize
those were the moments that truly made us
happy.

– NIHARIKA SAGAR G K, 15, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Pleasant recollections

Happy, golden memories.
They are pleasant recollections,
Not seeking perfection, just pure affection.
They are sweet reflections, which result in dopamine elevation.
Like the first bike ride, your buddies by your side,
A rainy day in a dark room with mates, laughter was such a vibe.
They are nostalgic, funny, and sweet reflections,
The connections which turn fear into celebrations.
They merely turn our life into something worthwhile.
Even though we're alone, we still stay connected.
Anxiety fades, stress hormones lower,
Fears do not disturb much, life becomes a field of flowers.



– ASBAH SADATH, 15, Bengaluru, Karnataka

A joyful journey

I went to a beach in Pondicherry.
We found a hotel and kept our bags in the room.
We freshened up, relaxed for an hour, and changed our clothes.
There was a restaurant where we had yummy food,
and we went to lots of places.
The best part was that I saw golden thunder.
After three days, we left and came home with
happy memories.

– VIVAAN KISHORE ANUMULA, 8
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Memories we keep

We've had some good times,
I must say,
Through hardship and
Life's way.
We've all had a laugh
And a cry.
We've all been scared,
But we've given it a try.
With friends and family,
We'll have a good time.
And to be angry
Is like a crime.
Of all the times
we've enjoyed,
We'll have happy
memories.

– SHANAYA BHATTACHARYA, 10
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Mystic memories

Memories are the happiest things ever.
Don't forget them, oh never.
Memories, the memories,
Memories are forever.
Bonded together
With love forever.
Memories don't fade away
Through mystic times.

– LAAIBAH ASNA, 12
Hubballi, Karnataka

My faithful little friend

Once I saw a little dog,
I fed it every day.
It soon became my dearest friend,
Together we would laugh and play.
It chewed upon my favourite shoe,
I chased it off in anger too.
Then I felt sad and hoped one day
My little friend would come back to stay.
One fateful day it came back again,
And we continued on to play.
My heart was full of joy that day,
And that was the happiest day!
Thank you for reading my poem. I hope you like it.

– AVYAKTA B R, 12
Bengaluru, Karnataka

LET'S DEBATE!

Want to take part in the upcoming *Open Sesame* debate? Share your thoughts in a crisp 200-word essay on the topic 'Is it better to adopt pets than buy them?' Mail your works to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Entries close on May 14. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, school, and city. And send us a recent photograph.

ART CORNER Love painting?

Want to showcase your flair for colours? Send your paintings on the theme 'Inside my mind' to *Open Sesame* and stand a chance to get featured in an upcoming edition. Mail photographs of your work to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph of yourself. Entries close on May 7.

Word of the Week

valiant

(adjective)
— full of courage and not afraid

Usage:
— The firefighter made a valiant effort to rescue the family trapped inside the burning house.
— The little girl gave a valiant smile even though she was in pain.

This Week:

Movie maestro

Open Sesame Quiz

Take the fun Open Sesame quiz, and stand a chance to win gift vouchers worth Rs 500. Open to children below 16 years.

Q1 Born on May 2, 1921, legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray made his directorial debut with the widely acclaimed 1955 film, 'Pather Pancholi'. Who composed its score and soundtrack, using classical Indian ragas?

Q2 On March 30, 1992, shortly before his passing, Satyajit Ray received an Honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement, at the 64th Academy Awards. Which Hollywood celebrity made the announcement?

Q3 A 1964 film by Satyajit Ray (reportedly his favourite) earned him a Silver Bear for Best Director, at the 15th Berlin International Film Festival. What is its title?

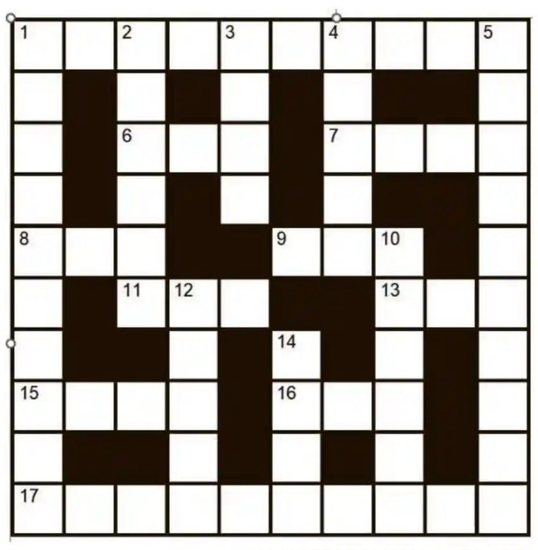
Scan the QR code
Or visit bit.ly/DHopensesame to participate in the quiz.

Q4 **Rhyme Time:** Two clues to which the answers rhyme with each other.
Clue A: In the 1940s, Satyajit Ray worked as a book-cover designer at the Signet __.
Clue B: One-piece garment for women or girls.

Q5 **Clue Cluster:** In 1961, who commissioned Satyajit Ray to make a film on the occasion of Rabindranath Tagore's birth centennial? Use these clues.
a) Allahabad
b) Barrister
c) Kamala
d) Shantivan

WINNER'S NAMES: Apeksha Bhaskar (10), Sringeri; Achinthya T N (10), Tumakuru; Samanvita Srivatsa (11), Bengaluru.
ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ: A1) 'As You Like It', A2) Envy/Jealousy, A3) 'Hamnet, A4) Sonnet/Bonnet, A5) Juliet

CROSSWORD



BY CHITTARANJAN ANDRADE

Across
1 Six balls bowled without a run scored (6,4)
6 Bob the head in agreement (3)
7 Percussion instrument (4)
8 Decay (3)
9 Colouring substance (3)
11 Make a mistake (3)
13 Distress signal (3)
15 Among (4)
16 Birdman of India, Salim __ (3)
17 What a footballer wants to do (5,1,4)

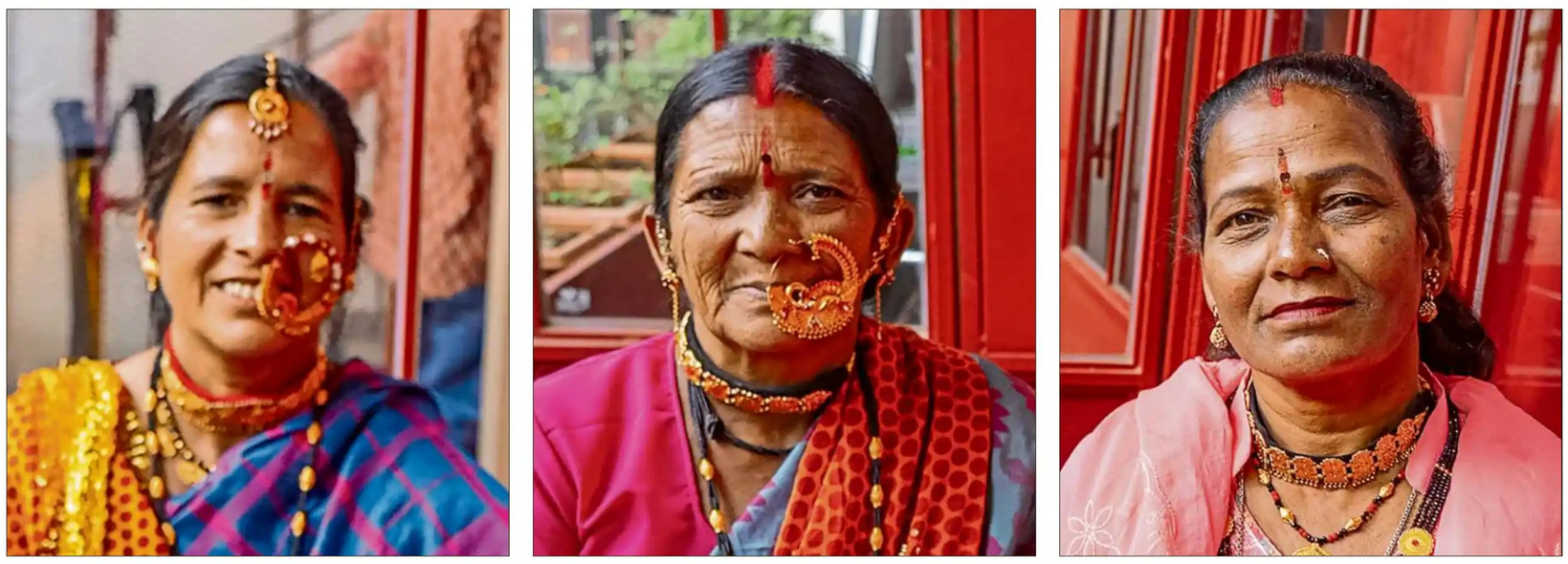
Down
1 Olden day Indian kings (10)
2 Set alight (6)
3 Finishes (4)
4 In a strange way (5)
5 In a sorry mood (10)
10 Native of Alaska (6)
12 Person on horseback (5)
14 Indonesian island (4)

ANSWERS
Across: 1 Maiden over, 6 Nod, 7 Drum, 8 Rot, 9 Dye, 11 Err, 13 Sos, 15 Amid, 16 Ali, 17 Score a goal.
Down: 1 Maharajahs, 2 Ignite, 3 Ends, 4 Oddly, 5 Remorseful, 10 Eskimo, 12 Rider, 14 Java.

Voices unbound

Folk songs that travel beyond the threshold

Women folk artistes remain marginalised, often within their own homes. A hip-hop artiste travelled across India to document 23 such voices. Amulya B recounts their journeys



(From left): Khasti Devi, Pushpa Devi and Hemanti Devi, from Uttarakhand, are part of the Nyoli Ensemble, which performed in Bengaluru. PIC: EHRAZ ASMADUS ZAMAN

Krantinaari aka Ashwini Hiremath (extreme left) at a performance with members of the Nyoli Ensemble at the Indian Music Experience museum in Bengaluru.

As a regular attendee of events at Bangalore International Centre (BIC) in Bengaluru's Domlur, I did not need any convincing when a friend suggested that we attend an event called 'Sound of Women'. It was a musical project by Mumbai-based hip-hop artiste Krantinaari and Chennai-based musician Charu Hariharan.

Before that Monday evening, I hadn't heard of Krantinaari or the project, which was founded on the belief that hip-hop is equivalent to folk. I may not have enough knowledge of hip-hop, but I was familiar with folk. As a theatre kid, I grew up listening to and singing folk songs — they were part of the cultural landscape of Kannada and Karnataka. I was intrigued by the idea and curious as to how it would translate onto the stage.

The performance was led by three women — Hemanti Devi, Pushpa Devi and Kashti Devi — from Uttarakhand, who were joined by Charu and Krantinaari. Together, they made up the Nyoli Ensemble under the umbrella of the 'Sound of Women' project.

The region is known for its incredible natural beauty, which is as breathtaking as it is brutal. So the songs talked about the beauty of their homeland ('Himali hawa'), the flowers blooming in the Himalayas ('Burusika phola'), hunger and survival ('Bhokmari'), and the indiscriminate felling of trees ('Banj ni kata').

That these songs were in Kumaoni was not a hindrance. Audiences instantly connected with their eco-feminist themes. The percussion, bass, and hip-hop elements merely acted as accompaniments without overpowering the folk characteristic of the Kumaoni tunes. Yet, a discerning audience member could detect some missed beats, mismatched tempo and a few off-key notes.

But, it hardly mattered, as the audience was encouraged to join in and actively participate, often becoming a human metronome themselves!

It reminded me of the freedom I felt when I was introduced to folk songs, with fewer barriers compared to classical music, which continues to be heavily gatekept by certain caste groups.

So, the performance was indeed folk — or as we call it in Kannada, "janapada" — the voice of the people. The voices were untrained, raw, but also honest.

How deep do the roots go?

Mera roots hai mazboot,
Kala hai mera dastoor
Kalakaari mai basa mera fitoor

This hook from Krantinaari's 2024 release, 'Roots', is an earworm that is not only memorable and catchy but also encapsulates the thematic focus of the Mumbai-based artiste's musical oeuvre. A communication designer by training, Krantinaari aka Ashwini Hiremath quit her cushy Microsoft job to follow her destiny: to make music. However, she does not have a musical background nor is she trained in music.

Originally from Hubballi in North Karnataka, Ashwini grew up in cosmopolitan Mumbai, in a linguistically rich environment where Kannada, Hindi, and Marathi were commonly spoken. She also picked up Kutchi and Gujarati in the chawls. In fact, she recalls how her first song, 'Krantinaari', had 50 drafts in five different languages! English was not one of them. For her, it was a foreign language and still is. Despite being a student of an English-medium school, she struggled with the language. This language barrier meant a lack of opportunities: from the classroom to the playground to extra-curriculars.

"In school, they would tell me: since I'm not one of the top 10 rank holders in the class, I cannot join the singing group," recalls Ashwini. "How does that make sense?"

As a young adolescent, Eminem's 'Beautiful' gave her an outlet for the suffocation she felt in her immediate environment. This was her first exposure to hip-hop. "The lyrics were so powerful that they forced me to develop my own voice," says Ashwini.

Ashwini to Krantinaari

The name 'Krantinaari' is a play on the word, 'krantikaari', the revolutionary. The word evokes a masculine image — perhaps of freedom fighters, often a man. Ashwini wanted to challenge this assumption.

"When you call yourself 'Krantinaari', you are motivated to see yourself as one," asserts Ashwini. "I always say that 'Krantinaari' is not (only) me, but every woman who has taken birth on this planet," she says, alluding to the female foeticide cases in India that are widespread even today.

Krantinaari's journey has not been smooth. "The men are the curators," says Ashwini. "They said there is no audience for a woman hip-hop artiste. So we never got a stage."

As someone who often raps about the identity and experience of being a woman, she was bothered by the lack of exposure needed for an artiste in order to hone her craft. That's when she decided to take matters into her own hands.

Wild Wild Women, Krantinaari's first "experimental crew", is believed to be the first all-female hip-hop band of India. Born on the streets of Mumbai, it has now made it to international venues and will soon be touring Europe. "If something like this can happen in Mumbai, why not the rest of the country?" This thought led her to travel to 72 regions across the country to witness the relationship between women and music. The project 'Sound of Women' is the result of this adventure.

Soundmakers, changemakers

In Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, Ashwini remembers coming across a globally renowned alghoza player. Made by joining two beak flutes, the alghoza is a traditional musical instrument of the Sindhi community and used by folk musicians in the region and beyond. She remembers how this alghoza player kept his wife away from the instrument, even barring her from entering the room when he played. Ashwini saw this play out again and again as she travelled across the country.

"The women were not allowed to sing, not allowed to perform beyond the four walls of their homes," recalls Ashwini. "Many see music and performance as something vulgar. I wanted to change that."

The absence of women in the public musical scene of rural India, led to the founding of 'Sound of Women' with the belief that hip-hop is folk. This assertion is not surprising, given the history of hip-hop, which grew out of the Black American experience in '70s New York. Much like folk music, it was once the music of the marginalised. "With Sound of Women, I think we have left our past work behind us," says Charu Hariharan, Krantinaari's collaborator and producer of the project. "We wanted to start afresh with a new sound and some new writing."

A musician and percussionist in the Karnatik tradition, Chennai-based Charu had been involved in the documentation of folk and tribal musical traditions of North Kerala. A serendipitous meeting in 2024 with Krantinaari in Bengaluru led to the founding of their own company, called Folk Soul, and the project 'Sound of Women', in the same year.

Using the Manil Mystic's Music Bus, a mobile recording studio, the project has documented the music of 23 folk artistes across Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Eventually, they want these songs to be accessible to the larger public under the 'FolkSoul Library'. However, the specifics of the plan — whether to make this a digital or physical library and what this would look like — are yet to be decided. With the advent of GenAI, Ashwini worries about the possible misuse and misappropriation of this intangible cultural heritage.

Folk Soul as a company has been running by the generosity of the people involved, like the Manil Mystic's bus, as well as successful crowdfunding initiatives. Additionally, the money Ashwini has earned from her act as Krantinaari, including the funding she received from the Global Fund for Women, has also gone into the project. The Uttar Pradesh leg of the 'Sound of Women' project was possible due to the Studio Monkey Shoulder Grant.

While Ashwini handles the logistical parts of the project, Charu is focused on the creative process of bringing a song to life. She works with the women to put the tracks together with all the accompaniments, like the percussion and the bass. In the initial stages, Charu would sing with them during the recording, as the women were not yet comfortable singing in front of the microphone. She would then remove her own voice in the editing process.

"Now, they want to share that part of their lives with the world."

As a producer, she knows her job is only to make the songs fit into the larger narrative of performance: "I don't mess with the recipe. I just work on the presentation."

Kinship with Kumaoni

But why choose Uttarakhand as the first region for this project? Ashwini credits the kinship she felt with the Kumaoni language for her decision.

"The way they speak is so fast that it felt like everyone was rapping!" chuckles Ashwini. "It was an instant connection for me as a rap artiste."

The Kumaoni language is spoken across the Kumaon region in Uttarakhand as well as in Nepal. However, it is a language in decline. According to UNESCO's 'Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger', Kumaoni is designated as "vulnerable" to extinction. For Ashwini, who has always been vocal about linguistic rootedness and identity, it felt natural to "try to preserve [Kumaoni] through music".

"We are not running behind perfection," says Krantinaari. "It is about the experience of being on stage."

It's not surprising then that the performance also had a confessional element to it, where the women shared not only the music of their hometown but also the literal and metaphorical journey from the Kumaoni hills to a stage in Bengaluru: the excitement of being on an aircraft for the first time to the difficulties at home.

Hemanti, one of the women from the Nyoli Ensemble, is a third-generation singer. Her mother and grandmother were both singers. "They paved the way for me. My mother recognised my talent and encouraged me to sing. After I turned eight, I would accompany her on her performances in the village," Hemanti shares.

Currently in her 50s, Hemanti continues to be invited to perform at weddings and birthday parties in her village. They sing their own compositions. Her mother, in the 1970s, travelled to Bombay to record a song, she recalls. "It was a time when women did not even step out of their houses, where I come from. But my mother set a bold example for me," she states. Though Hemanti has three kids, none of them shares her passion for singing. Her husband is a tailor and makes steady money, but it is not enough to support the whole family. However, her collaboration with Krantinaari has made a significant difference to the family's finances.

It made me rethink what it means to expect perfection from folk artistes, who not only have managed to overcome familial and societal hurdles but also incredible shyness and aversion to owning the stage. Perhaps the rawness of the untrained voices is a change of pace in a world that's becoming sick of artificially achieved perfection — from autotuned concerts to algorithmically determined AI slop.

"If there is no freedom to make mistakes, you're not going to grow at all," says Charu. "I think the ultimate thing is to actually keep working."

Empowerment by choice

As musicians themselves, Ashwini and Charu are keenly aware of the exploitation that folk musicians face. It's a cliche at this point, how folk music is exoticised and looked at through an Oriental gaze, stripped of its context, ready to be appropriated and bastardised into mainstream pop or film music.

So they spent a considerable amount of time with the women to build trust and make them understand that "they were there to work together and not for anything else."

The project has kept every process "open and democratic," including the payment. When the ensemble performs, according to Charu, everyone gets paid the same amount. "Kashti tai and Hemanti tai earn around Rs 35,000 from each tour," reveals Ashwini.

This has brought about change in their villages. Ganga Devi is a member of the Nyoli ensemble but was unable to travel with the others due to opposition from her husband. She has informed Ashwini that she'd join them on their the next tour, come what may. "Through this entire project, we wanted to empower them in ways that they wanted to be empowered," says Charu. "We can't choose how to empower them, right?"

What began as a documentation and archival project with elements of storytelling has now become a conduit for change at the societal level, however small such a change might be.

Ashwini, who once faced pushback from the hip-hop music industry due to her gender, is no longer interested in its validation.

"More than the music industry, what matters to me is the change in attitude," asserts Ashwini. "Because that is the change I'm working towards."

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MUSICANA

Pop band with eyes on Glastonbury

Rocket Raja wants to make timeless music that truly moves people, writes Mannat Chauhan

In 2025, Roshan Cariappa, Puneet Shankar, and Kishan Hebbar met over breakfast and decided to jam. They were meeting for the first time after the pandemic. The session brought back the thrill of playing for different bands, as they used to during their college days, and they decided it was time to start a band of their own. That's how Rocket Raja, a pop act with roots in blues, folk, and rock, was born.

Although they have day jobs, they treat Rocket Raja as a serious, long-term pursuit. Hebbar, the band's guitarist, manages an organic farming business, Shankar, the percussionist, works in the education sector, and Cariappa, the lead vocalist, heads marketing for a startup.

The trio did not take pop music seriously at first and took time to appreciate its nuance. Today, they aim to create music that can "stand the test of time and truly move people", drawing inspiration from artistes such as Led Zeppelin, Metallica and Zakir Hussain. Their storytelling draws from everyday life, from the highs and lows of relationships to the beauty of the mundane.

The band has written 15 songs so far, but hasn't released any. Their first single, 'Mud and gold' (in English and Punjabi), reflects on love, loss and longing. 'Yaarondige hogide', with its bluesy Kannada sound, explores the tension between personal identity and the chaotic world. It asks: Where are we headed as a world?

The band is in no hurry to release an album; they are focusing on "building a catalogue of music that feels like a continuous emotional journey, rather than a collection of disconnected singles".

Their priority is live shows, which "carry more weight than ever as AI-generated music catches up". They believe the 'art and science' of music is best experienced through the raw energy of a live performance. As Shankar puts it, listeners today "crave" the imperfection of live performances.

Alongside originals, they occasionally play covers at gigs. They see them as a way to break the ice and open audiences up to their original music. The Rolling Stones' 'You can't always get what you want' is a favourite, which they have reworked with a '60s Motown-style interlude. They also perform The Beatles' 'You've got to hide your love away', which they often follow up with their own 'Song #6'. They say it helps shift the mood from pensive to upbeat.

Although based in Bengaluru, the band prefers to compose at Hebbar's farm in Mangaluru. With its slower pace, the coastal city has become their songwriting oasis.

Their live shows in Bengaluru are intimate, and with each one, they are working towards crafting a "perfect" three-hour set and the stamina needed for bigger stages. Their dream is to perform at Glastonbury by 2030.

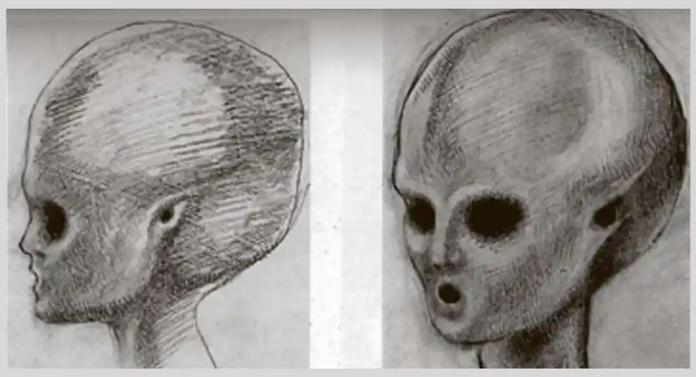
The band has written 15 songs so far.

The auteur saw sci-fi not as a spectacle, but as a philosophical enquiry grounded in science, writes Ritwik Kaikini

Satyajit Ray's rendezvous with aliens

Satyajit Ray was 10 when he first encountered sci-fi in his grand uncle Kuladaranjan's Bengali translation of Jules Verne's 'Mysterious Island'. He was fascinated by how the story tickled his imagination while remaining anchored in scientific details.

In an article titled 'SF' he wrote for *New Magazine* in 1966, Ray shared his own unique bifurcation of the sci-fi genre into the 'prosaic' and the 'poetic'. Verne's prosaic narratives balanced scientific rigour with carefully restrained imaginative liberties. H G Wells's 'The Time Machine' (1895), on the other hand, claimed to transport humans between the past and the future with the pull of a lever, leaning into the poetic liberties of experimental world-building. Wells makes the art of not fully explaining things believable through what Ray calls 'a dash of scientific patter' and 'a modus operandi that is made to sound absurdly simple'.



Ray's script with detailed sketches of the alien was circulated in Hollywood in the 1960s.

Ray's illustration for 'Bonkubabur Bondhu'. His 'The Alien' sketches eerily foreshadow visuals later seen in Steven Spielberg's 'E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial' (1982).

Ray devoured the works of authors such as Arthur C Clarke, Ray Bradbury, John Wyndham and Theodore Sturgeon, motivating him to helm stories involving science and technology. To revive their family magazine *Sandesh* and inspired by his father Sukumar Ray's story 'Heshoram Hoshiyar's Diary', Ray developed the character Professor Shonku in his story 'The Diary of a Space Traveller' (1961). The Shonku stories slowly matured in their scientific authenticity, as Ray began to keep himself abreast of the latest happenings in science, including the research on the mysterious Nazca Lines in Peru by Maria Reiche.

Ray categorised sci-fi into roughly four tropes: arrival of monsters from unknown lands, mutation of these monsters, humans against forces of an alien planet and humans menaced by their own technology. The last category finds expression in Ray's own short story 'Anukul', published in 1976, also adapted by Sujoy Ghosh into a short film. A robot servant begins to grasp the relationship dynamics between two individuals in a household and takes an informed, 'human' decision towards the end. The man who sells the robots at the shop warns the curious owner, 'You must talk to him politely.' Looking back, 'Anukul' reads like an early take on artificial intelligence and its moral stakes.

Sujoy Ghosh's 'Anukul' is an adaptation of Ray's short story by the same name, about a robot servant.

In a 1982 interview for AIR with sci-fi author Sankarshan Roy and psychologist Dr Amit Chakraborty, Ray admitted to being convinced of the presence of paranormal entities after a close family member shared an account of an anomalous experience. A deep interest in parapsychology led Ray to write a short story called 'Bonkubabur Bandhu'.

In the story, Bonkubabu, a primary school teacher in Kankurgacchi, Kolkata, has a brief, enigmatic encounter with an alien who lands on Earth instead of Pluto. Loved by his students yet mocked by his adult peers, the content yet restive school teacher's life changes after meeting 'Ang' from planet 'Craneus'. Using a telescope-like device, Ang shows him glimpses of the Aurora Borealis in the North Pole, which leaves the less-travelled Bonkubabu in awe. As he learns about Ang's food habits, age and linguistic abilities, Bonkubabu is humbled to know that the alien is superior to humans. Bonkubabu returns to his modest life wiser and a lot more confident than before. Ray adapted the short story into a treatment script for a full-fledged feature film called 'The Alien'. The script made its way to Columbia Pictures but faced difficulty owing to complications with a middleman. The film's blueprint included highly detailed sketches of the alien and its other artefacts, bearing uncanny resemblances to depictions in a lot of Steven Spielberg's works, including 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' (1977), 'E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial' (1982) and the sci-fi series 'Taken' (2002). Ray's script was circulated in Hollywood in the late 1960s, which led to speculations that its ideas were known to American filmmakers.

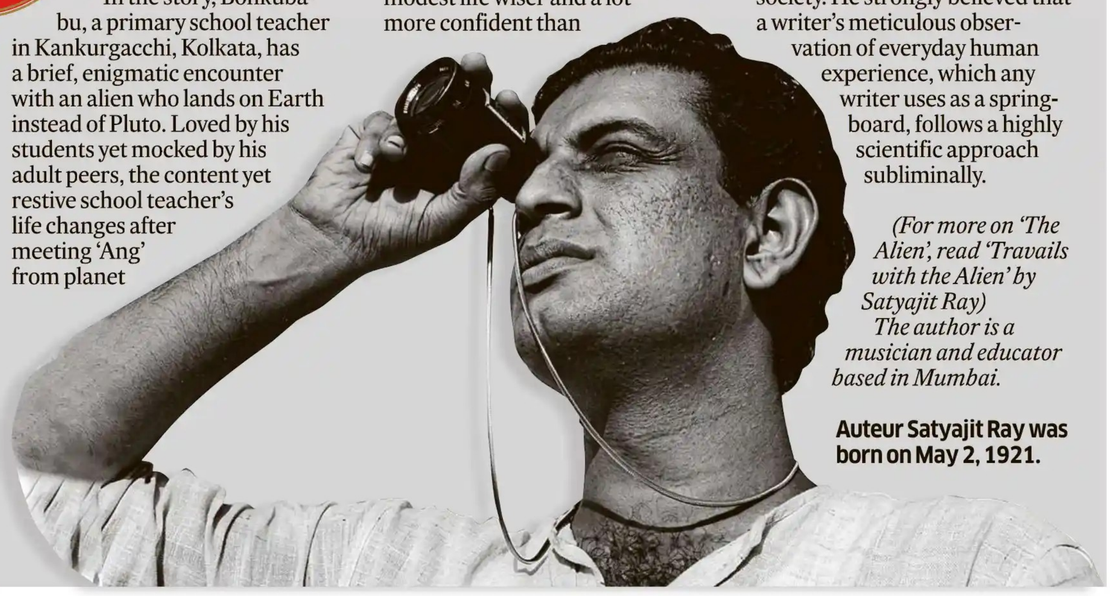
Peppering his narratives with crumbs of science, magical absurdity and hyper realism, Ray laid major emphasis on a character's behavioural changes while in pursuit of inner truth. In his argument, these tales also counted as sci-fi since they were deeply rooted in human psychology.

In his film 'Parash Pathar' (1958), a middle-class bank clerk, tired of his daily struggles, stumbles upon a philosopher's stone that turns anything it touches into gold. In one of the standout scenes, when the clerk (played by Tulsi Chakrabarti) witnesses this miracle, he responds with a hysterical, helpless cry. Each time the stone appears, a shrill aural motif amplifies the moral confusion created by materialistic temptation. The comically treated satirical narrative explores how temptation drives the human psyche into a dangerous madness. The film's essence reminds one of John Steinbeck's novella 'The Pearl' (1947) and John Huston's 'The Treasure of Sierra Madre'(1948). Both probe the moral weight of guilt and greed in the human condition.

For Ray, sci-fi was not just an agent of scientific awareness but also a way of understanding storytelling and a provocative search for truths about contemporary society. He strongly believed that a writer's meticulous observation of everyday human experience, which any writer uses as a springboard, follows a highly scientific approach subliminally.

(For more on 'The Alien', read 'Travails with the Alien' by Satyajit Ray)

The author is a musician and educator based in Mumbai.



Auteur Satyajit Ray was born on May 2, 1921.

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to dhonsat @deccanherald.co.in

B-town's curious D-fixation

In the popular Hindi film imagination, all underworld roads still lead to a fugitive gangster with trademark glares and a signature moustache, writes Roshmila Bhattacharya

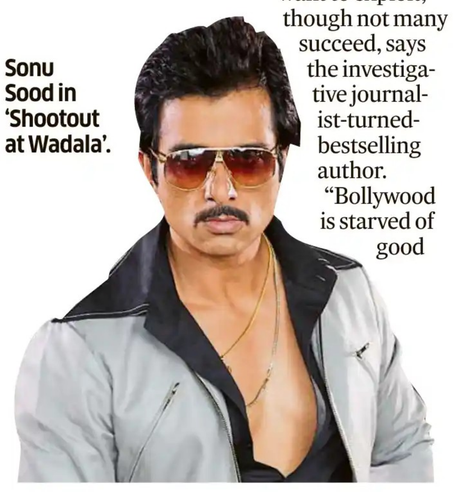
What's common between 'Dhurandhar 2' and 'Matka King'? The D-connection! Danish Iqbal's Bade Sahab in Aditya Dhar's film, the elderly puppet master of Karachi's drug mafia overseeing terror operations against India from his bed, is obviously modelled on an ailing Dawood Ibrahim. Vineet Kumar Singh's Darab, a rising underworld figure in 'Matka King' (Amazon Prime Video), set in 1960s Mumbai, is the don from his younger days.

Danish Iqbal in 'Dhurandhar 2'.

Over the years, the gangster with his trademark glares and signature moustache has inspired several characters, from Vijay Maurya and Siddhanth Kapoor's Dawood Ibrahim in 'Black Friday' and 'Haseena Parker' to Emraan Hashmi and Akshay Kumar's Shoaib Khan in 'Once Upon a Time in Mumbaai' and its sequel. Rishi Kapoor's Iqbal Seth aka Goldman in 'D-Day', Ajay Devgn's Mallik in 'Company', Sonu Sood's Dilawar Imtiaz Haskar in 'Shootout at Wadala', Randeep Hooda's Deshu in 'D', Gautam Joglekar's Masood Abraham Katkar in 'An Action Hero' and Avinash Tiwary's Jalaluddin 'Jalal' Shah in 'O' Romeo' are some of the other avatars and caricatures.

Rishi Kapoor plays the don in 'D-Day'.

Hussain Zaidi, whose 2012 book, 'Dongri to Dubai: Six Decades of the Mumbai Mafia', has been the muse, mostly uncredited, for many of these characters, attributes the fixation to Dawood's fascinating story. The son of an honest cop, he grew up with 10 siblings in a Dongri chawl, moved to Dubai, rose to staggering heights, and over the past decade, has allegedly been holding sway in Pakistan and the Gulf countries, with clout and connections in India too. It's a rags-to-riches story filmmakers want to exploit, though not many succeed, says the investigative journalist-turned-bestselling author. "Bollywood is starved of good content and a strong antagonist. Being creatively bankrupt, it can't develop original characters easily, so it can't see beyond Dawood and the syndicate," points out Zaidi.



Sonu Sood in 'Shootout at Wadala'.

The fugitive gangster has been associated with many crimes, including the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts, which are clearly etched on D-Day's writer-director Nikkhil Advani's mind. "I was studying in St Xavier's College then and remember going late at night to see the bombed passport office where I might have once stood in queue, now an empty shell full of glass and concrete," he reminisces, adding that since then, Dawood Ibrahim has become a name Mumbaikars instantly recognise. "*Bachcha bachcha yeh naam janta hain* (Every child knows the name), so it's fairly effective to pin him down as India's Most Wanted."

Advani admits he became obsessed with finding out everything about Dawood — the myth and reality surrounding him — but never thought he would one day make a film with him as one of the central characters. Goldman remains one of Rishi Kapoor's most memorable performances and Zaidi's favourite, along with Vijay Maurya's Dawood in 'Black Friday'.

Sonu Sood as Dilawar in 'Shootout at Wadala' is also unforgettable, and he admits it was exciting to play the character, having read so much about Dawood and grown up watching different actors play him. "We created the '70s and '80s world, with sets, props and costumes. People still talk about Dilawar, and I hope I did justice to him," says Sood.

"Seemingly, even now, all roads lead to Dawood," Advani quips. Zaidi believes B-town's D-fixation will continue till Dawood is alive, and a decade after his death.

"Till they find a new don," he says, pointing to Lawrence Bishnoi, a constable's son with an equally fascinating story that traverses India to Canada, from Delhi's Tihar Jail to Gujarat's Sabarmati Central Jail. "Bishnoi has been targeting politicians, threatening film stars and killing singers. There are 84 criminal cases against him across India. Canadian authorities have linked him to the pro-Khalistan movement, which he has denied, describing himself as a "patriot" while claiming responsibility for several assassinations. Bollywood's already hooked!"

MOVIE REVIEWS

A swan song to a fading world

VARSHA GOWDA

When 'The Devil Wears Prada' came out in 2006, the landscape of fashion and journalism was decidedly different. Today, newspapers and magazines are downsizing, and everything we consume is mediated through our phones. It is in this context that the film reintroduces us to the devil in question, Miranda Priestly, played by the meticulous Meryl Streep, editor-in-chief of the fictional *Runway* magazine.

We learn that Andy Sachs, played by Anne Hathaway, has gone on to pursue the serious journalism career she so aspired to, but it is far from stable. She and her colleagues are abruptly laid off (via text) amid sweeping cuts. Just as her prospects seem uncertain, a chance controversy involving Miranda emerges, setting the stage for Andy's return to *Runway*.

Hired as the features editor, her confidence and experience seem to carry little weight with Miranda, who shows no indication that she remembers Andy. Even with the biting dialogue intact, Miranda's signature frost thaws as publishing yields to shifting ad revenues and the attention economy. Andy's reunions with Nigel (Stanley Tucci) and Emily (Emily Blunt) are sure to leave some misty-eyed. Like the previous film, the sequel rollercoasters through the capricious shifts of power in the ecosystem of media ownership. Peter (Patrick Brammall) brings a touch of romance to the narrative, though the subplot feels somewhat shoehorned in.

Anne Hathaway and Meryl Streep in 'The Devil Wears Prada 2'.

★★★½

The Devil Wears Prada 2

English (Theatres)

Director: David Frankel

Cast: Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, Stanley Tucci

While the signature acerbic wit remains, the sequel is a swan song to a world that is rapidly fading, lending the film some heart. From one montage to the next, the movie successfully dances through fan-service moments and issues cold reality checks. It questions what we lose as AI takes hold. What becomes of history, artistry, and our pursuit of beauty?

Ultimately, 'The Devil Wears Prada 2' achieves what few sequels manage to do: it finds new ground to cover, fresh observations to offer about the world, and new critiques alongside its achievements. This makes it a worthwhile watch. Don't move at a glacial pace to watch this film, we know what Miranda thinks of that!

Same drama in natty wrapping

NIKHIL WAIKER

★★

Kara

Tamil (Theatres)

Director: Vignesh Raja

Cast: Dhanush, Mamitha Baiju, Sreeja Ravi

The apparent trend in cinema now is to package films with new, natty elements that are presumably for marketing rather than for any artistic value. The changes, if you will, are evident in the plot setting, the music, the complexity of the plot's consequences, and the redemption arc that revolves around it. But, at the end of the day, they all seem to be manufactured the same way as before.

'Kara' is set in Ramanathapuram in 1991, where the Gulf War has dried up the fuel pumps, and the banks are quietly eating up the farmers' ancestral lands. Dhanush, a manifestation of the consequences of the situation, is a former thief who has seemingly changed his ways.

Dhanush in 'Kara'.

The journey of the 'anti-hero-hero' begins. Although there has been a 'better now than later' shift away from the theatrical grand entries of lead actors, this change does little for the film's formal or narrative freshness. The long duration of the film does well to add tension and sustain it, but it lacks substance.

Following the establishment of the characters, act, and plot in the first half, the second half suffers from predictability. Other than the duration and the plot setting, the film, when seen in its totality, fails to deliver what it establishes and falls back on the age-old melodrama trick.

Bittersweet tale of love in Japan

AISHWARYA VASUDEVAN

★★½

Ek Din

Hindi (Theatres)

Director: Sunil Pandey

Cast: Sai Pallavi, Junaid Khan

In an era of cinema dominated by high-decibel characters and plotlines, 'Ek Din' arrives as a breath of fresh air, using silence as its most powerful tool. It is a Hindi remake of the Thai gem 'One Day'.

The film marks Sai Pallavi's highly anticipated Bollywood debut, and she carries the same ethereal aura that captivated audiences in 'Premam' (2015). Opposite her is Junaid Khan, who plays a character that feels like a natural extension of his persona — shy, awkward, and a man of few words. As the 'invisible' Dinesh (Dino), he captures the ache of a man secretly in love with his colleague Meera (Pallavi).

Sai Pallavi and Junaid Khan.

The plot kicks into gear during an office trip to Japan, where a twist of fate grants Dino his wish to spend a day with Meera. 'Ek Din' explores the idea of living a lifetime's worth of emotions in just 24 hours.

Khan and Pallavi's 'mushy' yet grounded chemistry works because it starts as a platonic bond. The soundtrack by Ram Sampath is a highlight too. In a world of incessant VFX, 'Ek Din' banks on the natural beauty and organic tones of Japan to enhance its grounded realism, prioritising emotional texture over dramatic tropes. It lets silence do the heavy lifting and leaves a bittersweet ache that feels both intimate and incomplete.

Stellar cast in ho-hum thriller

DIVYA P

★★★

Patriot

Malayalam (Theatres)

Director: Mahesh Narayanan

Cast: Mammootty, Mohanlal, Fahadh Faasil, Nayanthara

In a big-budget movie that's reuniting the biggest of Malayalam stars, Mammootty and Mohanlal, one would not expect to see their characters conversing about death. That this sequence is placed right before a high-octane chase is proof that director Mahesh Narayanan has a different handbook when it comes to making a movie with stars. 'Patriot' is devoid of the mass sequences, except for Mohanlal, who does get moments to shine.

Written by Mahesh, 'Patriot' swiftly dives into the core conflict — spyware Periscope, which is now with a private company. Daniel James (Mammootty) finds himself branded a traitor, forcing him to flee to the UK, where he becomes a vlogger.

You could be reminded of another Mahesh film, 'CU Soon', as the editor-turned-director makes the case for how the phone in your hand could be spying on you.

Mammootty leads the thriller, and his scenes with Mohanlal are the high points of 'Patriot', even when the makers are not playing to the galleries. Mahesh has also 'dared' to go for an unlikely closure for one of the star characters, and that is commendable.

Mammootty and Mohanlal in 'Patriot'.

The biggest let-down is its runtime of three hours. The final leg feels stretched, even undoing the focused storytelling up until then. Fahadh Faasil makes the most of his vile character Shakthi. Kunchacko Boban, Rajiv Menon, Darshana Rajendran and Zarin Shihab make an impression.

'Patriot' is slickly shot across foreign locations by Manush Nandan and complemented well by Sushin Shyam's music. Mahesh tackles a relevant topic, but doesn't quite hit it out of the park.

Quick takes

Grim tidings

▸ Manoj Bajpayee's birthday post didn't quite go according to plan. He unveiled the first posters of 'Governor: The Silent Saviour' with him in the titular role, looking grim and errr... saviour *mafiq*. What's the tea, then? Well, the movie happens to be produced by Vipul 'The Kerala Story' Shah, and this did not go down well with many of Bajpayee's fans, who collectively went 'et tu Manoj' and dropped a flurry of tearful emojis. Milder ones wished him for his birthday and hoped he had not greenlighted another pro-govt slop. The posters, meanwhile, have grimmer taglines. Example: "If I fail... India fails". Let's hope the only thing that fails here is the propaganda.

Ctrl+Alt+Delete

▸ After the big controversy over vulgar lyrics in the item song, director Prem 'apologised' and said he would 'fix' the song. Technically, he did: by ensuring no one would ever hear it again. Looks like the easiest way out was to just go chop chop.

Don gone

▸ *Don ko pakadna mushkil hi nahin, namumkin hai.* Looks like *Don 3 ko parde pe lana bhi mushkil hi nahin, namumkin hai!* This is a film that seems to be chasing its own tail for ever now. When Ranveer Singh was announced as the new Don, replacing Shah Rukh Khan, there was predictable outrage. No sooner had the fans stopped fuming, there was a plot twist worthy of the original 'Don' (1978) movie. Ranveer has now reportedly said, thanks, but no thanks, and has also returned his hefty advance. Rumours are flying that Ranveer ditched 'Don 3' for 'Chandragupta Maurya', a historial epic he is apparently planning to produce along with Aditya Dhurandhar, sorry, Dhar.

IN BRIEF

Indian squad for AFC U-17

▸ Head coach Bibiano Fernandes on Friday named a 23-member Indian squad for the men's AFC U-17 Asian Cup beginning in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from May 5, reports PTI from New Delhi.

India squad: Goalkeepers: Alok Nishad, Manashjyoti Baruah, Rajrup Sarkar. **Defenders:** Abhishek Kumar Mondal, Indra Rana Magar, Korou Meitei Konthoujam, Lawmsangzuala, Lesvin Rebelo, Md Aimaan Bin, Shubham Poonia. **Midfielders:** Dallalmuon Gangte, Denny Singh Wangkhem, Diamond Singh Thokchom, Moosa Ashiq Sofi, Nitishkumar Meitei Yengkhom. **Forwards:** Adil Aman A, Azlaan Shah Kh, Gunleiba Wangkheirakpam, Heeranganba Seram, Rahan Ahmed, Raj Singh Wahengbam, Washington Singh Ngangom, Yuvraj Kadam.

India defeat Macau

▸ India beat Macau 8–1 in the U-18 Ice Hockey Asia Cup, with captain Gurtej Singh Bhatti leading the charge while scoring four goals in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, reports PTI from New Delhi.

India opened strongly and built an early lead, while staying in control through all three periods.

Ajay Dangi of Rajasthan opened the scoring for India, and with Bhatti scoring four goals, the team hit their stride as Itfiqar Hussain, Tanzin Tashi and Devansh Sharma added one goal each.

Deep Respect triumphs on opening day

BENGALURU RESULTS

Deep Respect upset Legacy Field in the International Labour Day Trophy over 1100m, the main event on the opening day of the Summer Season here on Friday. Deep Respect was trained by Satish Narredu and ridden by Suraj Narredu.

1. The Camino Plate (Div II) 1200M: Zayana (Mr Arun Alagappan) Pavan 1, Mystical Queen (Asirvatham) 2, Embosom (VR Jagadeesh) 3, Star Of The Future (Rayan Ahmed) 4; WB: 2-1/4, 8, 4L; T: 1:14.56; Tote: Rs 16w, 11, 14, 25p; Fc: Rs 55; Q: Rs 29; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 48; Tri: Rs 270 & 240; Exp: Rs 5525 & 3382. TB: I Ghatala Fav: Zayana.

2. Epsom Plate (Div II) 1300M: Frederika (P Arun Kumar) Ashhad Asbar 1, Queendom (Shreyas Singh) 2, Vibrant Queen (Alex Rozario) 3, Imperador (Makesh Kumar) 4; WB: 2 1/4, 2 1/2, 2 1/4L; T: 1:19.43; Tote: Rs 45w, 24, 10, 13p; Fc: Rs 145; Q: Rs 60; Shp: Rs 30; Thp: Rs 38; Tri: Rs 589 & 235; Exp: Rs 2265 & 1025; TB: Pradeep Annaiah; Fav: Queendom.

3. Camino Plate (Div I) 1200M: Zephyrine (Mr Arun Alagappan) Pavan 1, Royal Jewel (S Shareef) 2, Windcleaver (Vishwa) 3, Recreator (Arshad Alam) 4; NR: Agrima and Blue Saint; WB: 2-1/2, 3/4, 3L; T: 2:16.10; Tote: Rs 12w, 11, 10, 27p; Fc: Rs 16; Q: Rs 16; Shp: Rs 25; Thp: Rs 45; Tri: Rs 62 & 36; Exp: Rs 248 & 194; TB: I Ghatala; Fav: Zephyrine.

4. Pattadakal Plate 1400M: Bellavita (Mr Nirash Bothara) S Sachin 1, Thrill Of Brazil (Mukesh Kumar) 2, She Rules (Laxman Singh) 3, Golden Time (Alex Rozario) 4; WB: 2, 3-1/4, 1L; T: 1:28.00; Tote: Rs 34w, 14, 13, 14p; Fc: Rs 76; Q: Rs 33; Shp: Rs 24; Thp: Rs 44; Tri: Rs 246 & 124; Exp: Rs 1979 & 1074; TB: Neil B Devaney; Fav: Thrill Of Brazil.

5. International Labour Day Trophy 1100M: Deep Respect (Mr Daulat Chhabria, Teja Gollapudi, Dr Prabhakar CT and Ashok Ranpise) Suraj Narredu 1, Legacy Field (Akshay Kumar) 2, Burevestnik (P Trevor) 3, Portieux (Mukesh Kumar) 4; WB: 1/2, 1-1/2, 1-1/2; T: 1:08.61; Tote: Rs 61w, 13, 12, 11p; Fc: Rs 438; Q: Rs 156; Shp: Rs 21; Thp: Rs 85; Tri: Rs 213 & 87; Exp: Rs 1231 & 627; TB: S Narredu; Fav: Burevestnik.

6. Usha Stud Plate 1400M: Tolkien (Sarainaga Raging Pvt Ltd) Akshay Kumar 1, D Fronx (Ashhad Asbar) 2, Eagle Eye (P Trevor) 3, Winfield (S Antony Raj) 4; WB: 1-1/4, 1-3/4, 4L; T: 1:26.25; Tote: Rs 37w, 11, 85, 10p; Fc: Rs 1126; Q: Rs 515; Shp: Rs 159; Thp: Rs 68; Tri: Rs 1843 & 267; Exp: Rs 12,049 & 10,328; TB: D Byramji; Fav: Eagle Eye.

7. The Epsom Plate (Div I) 1300M: Hazel (Manjri Horse Breeders Farm, DT Racing & Breeding and Ashok Ranpise) Akshay Kumar 1, Auctav (Laxman Singh) 2, Larissa (P Trevor) 3, Magestic Persona (Suhas) 4; WB: Lnk, Hd, 6-1/2L; T: 1:20.38; Tote: Rs 26w, 12, 32, 11p; Fc: Rs 583; Q: Rs 754; Shp: Rs 127; Thp: Rs 45; Tri: Rs 939 & 227; Exp: Rs 13,020 & 5580. TB: Prasanna Kumar Fav: Hazel.

Jackpot: Rs 4235 & 835.
Mini jackpot: Rs 4641.
I treble: Rs 393.
II treble: Rs 943.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Mumbai Indians **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL

EPL: Brentford vs West Ham United, Newcastle United vs Brighton & Hove Albion, Wolverhampton Wanderers vs Sunderland **(all 7:30 pm)**, Arsenal vs Fulham **(10 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network.**

ISL: Inter Kashi FC vs North East United FC **(5 pm)**, Sporting Club Delhi vs Punjab FC **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network.**

BADMINTON

Thomas & Uber Cup: Semifinals **(1:30 & 9:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Select 2, JioHotstar.**

BADMINTON THOMAS CUP

India march into semifinals

Lakshya, Sat-Chi, Ayush win to down Chinese Taipei 3-0

HORSENS (DENMARK), PTI

Lakshya Sen saved two match points to beat world No. 6 Chou Tien Chen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty added a gritty doubles win, before Ayush Shetty delivered the final blow as India registered a commanding 3-0 victory over Chinese Taipei to storm into the semifinals of the Thomas Cup Finals on Friday.

Lakshya, who kept trailing for the better part of the contest, showed remarkable resilience to script an 18-21, 22-20, 21-17 victory in a marathon clash lasting one hour and 28 minutes.

World No. 4 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, the Asian Games champions, then defeated Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Wang Chi-Lin 23-21, 19-21, 21-12 in an hour and 15 minutes to put India in a commanding position.

The onus then shifted to Ayush Shetty, and the youngster delivered.

The 20-year-old, who recently reached the final of the Badminton Asia Championships, produced a breathtaking display, blending disciplined defence with attacking flair to notch up a 21-16, 21-17 win over world No. 8 and reigning All England Open Badminton Championships champion Lin Chun-Yi in the second singles to seal the contest.

"This is not just a win to celebrate, it's a performance to remember. One that reflects belief, preparation, and the growing strength of Indian badminton," former India coach Vimal Kumar said.

India, the 2022 champions, will face either France or Japan in the semifinals.

The victory also assured India a medal in the prestigious Thomas Cup Finals, regarded as the World Men's Team Championships.

India had won the Thomas Cup in 2022, besides winning bronze medals in 1952, 1955, and 1979.

"We believe that we can go all the way. It's always been like this. We have a solid team and everyone believes that we can do it," Ayush told BWF.

"Yesterday was the group stage, but today there was a bit more pressure. Being 2-0 up made it a bit easier. I think I played with confidence and I'm happy to win for the team," added the 20-year-old.

Lakshya Sen saved two match points to beat world No. 6 Chou Tien Chen in the opening singles during India's quarterfinal win over Chinese Taipei at the Thomas Cup on Friday. AFP FILE PHOTO

SEMIFINAL, LIVE AT 1:30 PM STAR SPORTS, JIOHOTSTAR

Lakshya vs Chou

With the head-to-head locked at 4-4 prior to this contest, the two engaged in another absorbing duel marked by long rallies, precise stroke-play and intense momentum swings.

Chou displayed his experience in the opening game, recovering from 10-15 down and overturning a late deficit to take the lead.

Lakshya, however, responded under pressure in the second game. Trailing 13-17, the Indian reeled off four straight points to draw level. Chou earned two match points, but Lakshya held his nerve, saving both before closing out the game to force a decider.

The 36-year-old Chou appeared to fade physically in the third game as Lakshya seized control with an 11-7 lead at the interval and maintained his composure to seal the contest.

Wood hands Forest slender advantage

Striker's penalty seals 1-0 win over Aston Villa

NOTTINGHAM, AFP

Nottingham Forest seized the advantage in their Europa League semifinal against Aston Villa as Chris Wood's penalty sealed a 1-0 win in the first leg on Thursday.

Wood netted from the spot in the second half after a needless handball by Villa defender Lucas Digne in the all-English clash at the City Ground.

The New Zealand striker's fifth goal of an injury-plagued season moved Forest within touching distance of their first European final since 1980.

Vitor Pereira's side are on a nine-match unbeaten run in all competitions, carrying them five points clear of the Premier League relegation zone and to the verge of the Europa showpiece.

Forest will make the 50-mile trip to Villa Park for the second leg on May 7, with the winners facing Braga or Freiburg in the final in Istanbul on May 20.

Braga won 2-1 in the other semifinal first leg on Thursday.

Making it to Istanbul would be a dramatic finale to Forest's soap-opera season, featuring four managers and a tense relegation battle.

After the sacking of Nuno Espirito Santo, Ange Postecoglou and Sean Dyche, Pereira had led Forest to their first European semi-final since losing against Anderlecht in the 1983-84 UEFA Cup.

Crowned European champions in 1979 and 1980 in their golden era under Brian Clough, Forest have been starved of success over the last three decades.

Playing in Europe for the first time since 1995-96, Forest are chasing a first major trophy since the 1990 League Cup.

They have not been in any major final since losing against Manchester United in the 1992 League Cup.

Results: Nottingham Forest: 1 (Wood 71st) bt Aston Villa: 0; Braga: 2 (Tiknaz 8th, Mario Dorgeles 90+2) bt Freiburg: 1 (Vincenzo Grifo 16th).

Chris Wood

Saudi wealth fund to cut LIV golf funding

RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA), AFP: Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is cutting funding for the breakaway LIV Golf league after the 2026 season, a spokesperson from the fund told AFP on Thursday.

The announcement came hours after LIV Golf, founded in 2021 as a rival to the PGA Tour, said it was seeking to secure "long-term financial partners".

It has reportedly cost PIF over $5 billion so far to operate the series after signing many of the world's top players including Major winners Bryson DeChambeau and Spaniard Jon Rahm.

Saudi's powerful wealth fund, however, said funding for the project would be axed as PIF looked to trim a string of projects in the kingdom with the war in the Middle East raising fresh speculation about investment priorities.

Vimanapura, Mounts BC crowned champs

BENGALURU, DHNS

Vimanapura SC and Mounts BC emerged champions of the State Sub-junior (U-13) Basketball Championship in the boys' and girls' sections respectively for the BS Narayan Memorial Trophy at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on Friday.

Rakshith scored 18 points while Nirvair notched up another 12 as Vimanapura SC thrashed MCHS 47-26 to take the boys' title.

In the girls' final, Devishi and Kenisha impressed with 14 and 13 points respectively, as Mounts BC beat Bangalore Vanguards 62-45.

Winners Vimanapura SC and Mounts BC were awarded a cash prize of Rs 40,000 each while runners-up MCHS and Vanguards took home Rs 25,000 each.

Vimanapura Sports Club, winners of the State Sub-junior (U-13) Basketball Championship, pose with their spoils.
DH PHOTO/ B K JANARDHAN

Results: Boys final: Vimanapura: 47 (Rakshith 18, Nirvair 12) bt MCHS: 26. HT: 27-11; **3rd Place:** Bangalore Vanguards: 51 (Chayank 14, Neil 13) bt PPC: 38 (Narrun 9, Rakshak 6). HT: 25-24

Girls final: Mounts BC: 62 (Devishi 14, Kenisha 13) bt Bangalore Vanguards: 45 (Aarushi 23, Harshada 13). HT: 36-13. **3rd Place:** MCHS: 46 (Kannira 17, Vanshika 13) bt Beagles BC: 28 (Ayra 12) HT: 23-13.

Anvay's unbeaten ton powers Vijaya CC into quarters

BENGALURU, DHNS: Anvay Dravid slammed an unbeaten century to star in Vijaya Cricket Club's six-wicket win over Friends Union Cricket Club (1) in the pre-quarterfinals of the KSCA G Kasturirangan Memorial Trophy here.

LOCAL CRICKET

Propped up by half-centuries from Rohan RR (62) and Adarsh Manure (80), FUCC lads posted a competitive 205/3 in 20 overs. However, Anvay's 107 not out off just 46 balls ensured Vijaya CC cantered home in just 18.1 overs.

Brief scores (pre-quarterfinals): Friends Union Cricket Club (1): 205/3 in 20 overs (Rohan RR 62, Adarsh Manure 80, Sidharth Akhil 34 n.o.; Agastya S 2-33)
It to Vijaya Cricket Club: 208/4 in 18.1 overs (Dhruv Krishnan 27, Anvay Dravid 107 n.o., Yashovardhan Parantap 28 n.o.; Anil IG 2-20).
Coles Cricket Club: 210/7 in 20.0 overs (Sharath Belur Ravi 27, Pallav Kumar Das 31, Sagar Solanki 42, Gowtham Sagar 58 n.o; Ambresh K 2-38, Punitkumar 2-49)
It to Palar Sports Club, Kolar: 210/4 in 20 overs (Ritesh Bhatkal 51, Chiranth D 38, Thippa Reddy 40, Sudhanwa U Kulkarni 34 n.o., Preetesh 37 n.o.; Gowtham Sagar 2-40, S Suraj 2-28) via Super Over. In Super Over: Palar Sports Club, Kolar: 1/2 in 0.3 overs
It to Coles Cricket Club: 2 for no loss on 0.1 over.
South End Sports Club: 136 all out in 19.4 overs (Abhay Surya 31, Prajwal R 28, Vidwath Kaverappa 3-12, Kumar LR 3-17, Rajendra Danganavar 2-38) It to Sir Syed Cricketers: 142/6 in 15.4 overs (Nikin Jose SJ 50, Mohith BA 29, Akshath Prabhakar 36 n.o.; Ranjan MS 3-15).
Bangalore Occasionals: 235/5 in 20 overs (Bhuvan M Raju 29, Niranjan 57, Faizan Khan 32 n.o., Rajvir Wadhwa 63 n.o.; Darshan MB 2-57, Likhit Bannur 2-35) bt Mount Joy Cricket Club: 103/8 in 16.5 overs (Vinay Kumar Maski 25 n.o., Koushik V 2-18).
Swastic Union Cricket Club (1): 186/5 in 20 overs (Prakhar Chaturvedi 32, A Rohan Patil 30, Nitish Arya 62, Sanmay Rudrawadi 36 n.o.; Santhosh S 2-17) bt Rajajinagar Cricketers: 158/8 in 20 overs (Nihal Ullal 34, Vaasav Venkatesh 51 n.o.; Abhilash
2-33, Nischith N Rao 2-40, Paras Gurbax Arya 2-25).
Century Cricketers: 199/6 in 20 overs (Harsha Wardhan Khuba 27, Madhav P Bajaj 72 n.o., Rohit RV 55; Pranav Aswath 2-26) bt Cambridge Cricket Club: 169/9 in 20 overs (Chinmay NA 73; Karthik CA 2-24, Madhav P Bajaj 3-25, Harsha Wardhan Khuba 2-23).

RusAF-AFI to 'collaborate'

NEW DELHI, PTI: The athletics bodies of India and Russia are looking at a "long-term cooperation" in organising training camps, grassroots development works and mutual participation of their players in their respective competitions, the European country said.

Russian Athletics Federation (RusAF) said on Instagram that its officials -- Executive Director Boris Yaryshevsky and General Secretary Alexander Georgadze -- recently visited India and met Athletics Federation of India (AFI) officials.

The AFI officials, however, said that there was no specific programme agreed upon by the two sides as of now.

"Russian athletes will be able to compete in national competitions in India, while Indian athletes in several disciplines will have the opportunity to train in Russia. Coaches, in turn, will be able to exchange experience," RusAF said.

Currently, there are Russian coaches working under AFI.

Mahadev's double ton sparkles in Diamond CC win

BENGALURU, DHNS

LOCAL CRICKET

Adding runs at will, Mahadev Prasad MD's unbeaten double century powered Diamond Cricket Club to a whopping 411-run win over YMCA Cricket Club (1) in the KSCA YS Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy for 4th and 5th Division clubs here.

Batting first, Mahadev hammered a 166-ball 222 not out that had 27 boundaries. His team-mates Raghavendra M Balgi contributed 50 runs while Zameer Hussain added another 47 not out respectively to lift Diamond CC to 452 for 4 in 50 overs.

Later, the batters of YMCA CC (1) succumbed to the pressure of chasing a massive target before being skittled out for a mere 41 runs in 18.5 overs. Mohammed Saad Luqman (4/2), Kaushik Neergunda (3/13) and Rajath Bhat HR (2/3) starred with the ball for the winning team.

Brief scores: Diamond CC: 452/4 in 50 overs (Mahadev Prasad MD 222 n.o., Raghavendra M Balgi 50, Yathiraj CS 31, Zameer Hussain 47 n.o.; Hitesh CM 2-41) bt YMCA CC (1): 41 all out in 18.5 overs (Rajath Bhat HR 2-3, Kaushik Neergunda 3-13, Mohammed Saad Luqman 4-2).
Kengeri Cricketers: 198/5 in 30 overs (Anirudh M Bangera 29, Jagan Mohan V 36, Rohan V Kamble 31 n.o., Sreecharan Bandappa 52; TG Ravikiran 2-12) bt SSK CC: 141 all out in 23.4 overs (Satheesha V 30, Anil Kumarv 39; Jeevan HS 2-23, Sreecharan Bandappa 2-16, Sidvin Gowda 3-21). (Start of the match was delayed due to wet outfield & was revised to 30 overs overs a side).
Rajajinagar Colts CA: 139 all out in 27.2 overs (Deekshith HS 28, Dhanraj J 29; Dharsh MD 2-37, Pavan Joshi R 3-19, Ullas BM 4-16) bt Karnataka Youth CA, Malur: 102 all out in 33 overs (Abhi Karthik S 4-28, Ajay KM 3-21).
Shanthinagar Cricketers: 177 all out in 30.3 overs (Akshay 45, Koushik Narasimha Bhagwat 40; Sachin R Gankal 3-19, Kushal KA 3-39, Jayanth N 2-35) It to Victory CC: 180/6 in 25.1 overs (Sachin R Gankal 40, Prithvi Raj MR 82 n.o.; Siddharth Ram Narayan 4-34).
Garfield Cricketers: 183 all out in 36.2 overs (Kiran B Mali 60, Anthony Premraj 33, Venkat Tarun CV 40; Lohith Gowda 3-34, Jaivardhan Sipani 3-30, Harshith Kumar N 2-20) It to Young Boys CA: 185/7 in 34.3 overs (Shivaprasad S 89 no., Saurjyesh Das 38; Anthony Premraj 3-36).
Johnson CC: 221 all out in 39 overs (Ujwal C Reddy 59, Danush N 71; Lokesh R 2-19, Yashas Kumar
5-46) bt Unique CC: 139 all out in 26.1 overs (Lokesh R 36, Yashwanth N Reddy 49; Manjunath Ramanna 3-25, Danush N 2-22, Nithin AV 3-30).
Bangalore Dynamos SC: 229 all out in 49 overs (Pankaj K Gowda 79; Mohammad Zain 2-54, Rajashekar
M 3-22, Manjunatha S 2-28) It to New National CC: 230/8 in 45 overs (Manjunatha S 108, Mohammad Zain 30; Saidappa N 2-44, Pankaj K Gowda 2-37).
Vivekananda Union CC: 263 all out in 47 overs (Sunil G 25, Shiva Kumar V 36, Vinod Kumar M 45, Sathish S 53; Shahid 4-51, Harsh Kumar Sharma 4-43, Md Irfan 2-40) bt SIR MVIT CC: 204 all out in 40.1 overs (Shahid 44, Harsh Singh Rajpurohit 57; Vinod Kumar M 2-33, Sathish S 5-47).
Bowlers CC: 277 all out in 43 overs (Shanuddin PS 25, TM Dhyan 91, Perumal S 59; Akash K 3-57,
Suraj A 2-38) bt YMCA CC (3): 114 all out in 40.5 overs (Akash K 28; Rakesh P 3-15, Dhanush Vedakumar 2-15, Vinaykumar 2-30).
Super CC: 182/9 in 50 overs (Abhijeeth 61, Samarth Hegde 35; Pradeep 2-31, Vishal V Rao 2-31, Arun Kumar GS 2-18) It to Bangalore Sports CC: 185/7 in 43.5 overs (Santosh Kumar S 31, Arun Kumar GS 41, Vishal V Rao 34; Samarth Hegde 2-20, Abhijeeth 2-21).

Agniputhra, Baghpat tie ends in stalemate

BENGALURU, DHNS: A scratchy Agniputhra FC were held by Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat FC to a goalless draw in their second I League-3 fixture here at the Padukone-Dravid Centre of Sports Excellence on Friday.

Despite Agniputra enjoying the majority of possession and also having created good chances, the Baghpat backline produced a solid defensive show to take a point from the game.

Agniputhra, however, did have a chance to take the lead from the penalty spot as early as the fourth minute, but former Tamil Nadu Santosh Trophy player, Senthamil S, fired it wide of the post.

While they would be disappointed to not walk away with three points, Agniputhra became the first team in Group D to take points off leaders Baghpat. Local boy Gautam Rajesh was adjudged the Player of the Match.

Baghpat had earlier beaten both Delhi's Royal Rangers Football Club 3-2 and Himachal Pradesh's Techtro Swadesh United FC 3-1.

Baghpat remain at the top of the group with 7 points, while Agniputra slipped to third with four points in two games.

Results: Agniputhra: 0 drew with Baghpat FC: 0; New Friends Club, Dantewada: 2 (Sanjay S 45th+4, Srikant Gadaba 72nd) bt Techtro Swadesh United FC: 0.

Formula 1 returns in Miami amidst rule changes

MIAMI, AFP: Formula 1 returns to action at the Miami Grand Prix following an unexpected five-week break when a pair of races in the Middle East were called off because of the war in Iran.

The time off gave the FIA time to make changes to the regulations that drivers heavily criticised after the first three races of the year because of how the electrical battery power has changed the cars and competition.

Kimi Antonelli

Drivers won't be able to truly get a feel for the changes until Friday when practice begins, so everything they have learned so far has been limited to simulator work. While the drivers were able to offer opinions on how the FIA should attack the complaints about the car, they aren't sure how much influence they really had.

"It's not what we need yet to really make it flat out," said Max Verstappen.

Government of Karnataka

THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY,
(UNDER KPIDFE - IMA & OTHER SCAM)
3rd Floor, Podium Block, V.V Tower, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560001

NOTICE/INVITATION FOR E-AUCTION FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Pursuant to attachment of Immovable properties by the Government under the provisions of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors in Financial Establishments Act, 2004 (KPIDFE Act) and pursuant to the absolute attachment order by the Hon'ble Special Court, the Special Officer & Competent Authority is issuing notice for e-auction of the immovable property through e-auction on 'as is where is and whatever there is basis'. The intending bidders will be required to furnish Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (as mentioned against each auction in the e-portal provided by the Service Provider/Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only).

Short description of the Immovable Property (SPLOCA/AUC(2)/CR/07/2025-26)
Properties are free of all encumbrances and are in the name of Competent Authority appointed by Government and confirmed by the Special Court under KPIDFE Act, 2004 and Hon'ble High Court Of Karnataka has cleared the title (Khata stands in the name of Competent Authority and Auctioning Authority)

Sl. No.	DETAILS OF THE SCHEDULE PROPERTY (Clear Title by Court in order No. MISC No. 694/2019)	Minimum Bid Price (Rs)	EMD (Rs)	Bid Increase Value (Rs)
	No. 77, PID No. 91-33-77, Pottery Town Layout (William's Town), Civil Station, Bangalore-46. Measuring East to West 30 ft, North to South 57 ft 6 inches Total 1725 Sq.ft Location: https://maps.app.goo.gl/1JsBueaXDbQfo6LR8			
(a)	Ground Floor, Flat No. GF-01, UDS-350.75, SBA-1525 Sq.ft	79,08,750/-	7,91,000/-	80,000/-
(b)	1st Floor, Flat No. FF-01, UDS-350.75, SBA-1525 Sq.ft	80,37,000/-	8,04,000/-	81,000/-
(c)	2nd Floor, Flat No. SF-01, UDS-350.75, SBA-1525 Sq.ft	81,22,500/-	8,13,000/-	82,000/-
(d)	3rd Floor, Flat No.TF-01, UDS-350.75, SBA-1525 Sq.ft	79,51,500/-	7,96,000/-	80,000/-
(e)	4th Floor, Flat No.FF-01, UDS-322, SBA-1400 Sq.ft	79,51,500/-	7,96,000/-	80,000/-

Date of Pre-bid meeting & time and Place	Date of Inspection & time	Last Date of Submission of Bids & EMD submission	Date & Time of E Auction
14th May 2026, 3 pm to 4 pm Place: O/o SPLOCA, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, Visveswariah Tower, Bengaluru-01	18th May 2026 11:00am to 01:00pm	26th May 2026 Before 5pm	29th May 2026 11 am to 1 pm

For Registration & Online Auction, you can login to: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** (Helpdesk No: 080-46010000, 080-68948777) The interested bidders who require auction related information can contact Assistant Commissioner, Office of the Special Officer & Competent Authority, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, Visveswariah Towers, Dr.Ambedkar Veedi, Bengaluru-560001, e-mail ID: **splocaeauction@gmail.com** or Contact Mob. No 9945515174.

Sd/-
Special Officer & Competent Authority
(IMA & Other Scam), Bengaluru.

Date: 30-04-2026
Place: Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/434/Zen/2026-27

"I think it is, of course, a reflection that is not positive on the team, a controversy of any kind. All I can say is that both those (incidents) have been addressed by the BCCI and the franchise.

RR head coach Kumar Sangakkara

New buyer for Rajasthan Royals: Report

More than a month after the news came out that a consortium led by Indian American entrepreneur Kal Somani "had acquired Rajasthan Royals for $1.63 billion," the deal, according to a report in the State of Play, is yet to be finalised with at least one of the members of the consortium no longer committed to the agreement, reports DHNS from Bengaluru.

Meanwhile, Aditya Mittal, son of the steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, has submitted a binding offer for the franchise while Somani is reportedly pursuing a minority position instead of a controlling stake.

According to the report published on Friday, Somani had bid $1.55 billion to enter into an exclusivity agreement with the seller, securing the right to negotiate alone on behalf of his consortium for a fixed period, typically four to eight weeks. The price rose to $1.63 billion after adding five per cent transfer fee for the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

However, Somani's consortium has failed the "show of funds" (the moment when each member of the buying group must demonstrate that its capital is committed and available) which was scheduled for mid-April, the report claimed quoting a source.

The Mittal family, who had bid $1.1 billion in the original round, has now returned with a fresh binding offer with another party with the prospect of acquiring the Royals at a valuation closer to $1.4 billion than to Somani's $1.55 billion mark though the latter has not formally withdrawn from negotiations.

Capitals snap losing streak

Rahul, Nissanka smash fifties in comfortable 7-wkt win versus RR

JAIPUR, PTI

A wonderful exhibition of batting gifts by KL Rahul (75) and Pathum Nissanka (62) overshadowed Riyan Parag's redemptive 90, powering Delhi Capitals to a seven-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in their IPL match here on Friday.

Parag washed away a lot of criticism with a 50-ball blitz to lead the Royals to a competitive 225 for six. However, Delhi Capitals replied with excellent knocks by Rahul and Nissanka to reach 226 for three.

Parag stayed off the field for a good part of the second innings with a hamstring niggle. Yashasvi Jaiswal did the captain's duty for the Royals.

The Capitals made the best possible start to the chase as Rahul and Nissanka added 110 runs for the opening wicket in just 9.3 overs.

Rahul was a bit slow to begin with, but once he found his groove, the 34-year-old was sublime to watch.

He played shots all around the ground -- a cover drive off Nandre Burger, a pull off Jofra Archer and two imperious back-to-back sixes in the 'V' off Ravi Bishnoi.

Nissanka displayed his prowess in the pull shot, which yielded all his three maximums on the night -- one off Archer and two off Burger.

KL Rahul scored a brilliant 40-ball 75 to help Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Friday. AFP

Rahul brought up his fifty in 27 balls, four balls more than Nissanka, but the latter fell to Jadeja after failing to connect a reverse sweep.

The Bengaluru batter added a further 61 runs with Nitish Rana (33) as the Capitals maintained their momentum.

Both Rana and Rahul, who lofted Archer straight to Donnovan Ferreira at long on, fell in the space of six balls and the Capitals needed 49 runs from that point off 26 balls.

But Ashutosh Sharma and Tristan Stubbs managed that job very well, as DC pulled off their biggest chase in the IPL.

DC now moved up to sixth with eight points while the Royals stayed at fourth with 12 points.

Earlier, Parag vaporised multiple concerns surrounding him with a quality 90 as Rajasthan Royals posted a competitive 225 for six.

Parag had a lot to prove, and the right-hander did it in some style, notching up his first score above fifty this season.

SCORE BOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: Yashasvi Jaiswal c & b Starc 6, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi b Jamieson 4, Dhruv Jurel c Stubbs b Axar 42, Parag c Axar b Starc 90, Ravindra Jadeja c Sharma b Mitchell Starc 20, Donovan Ferreira (not out) 47, Shubham Dubey c Sharma b Natarajan 6, Jofra Archer (not out) 1. Extras (LB-3, W-6) 9. **TOTAL (for 6 wkts, 20 overs) 225.**

Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-12, 3-114, 4-167, 5-168, 6-208.

Bowling: Mitchell Starc 4-0-40-3, Kyle Jamieson 4-0-48-1, Axar Patel 4-0-39-1, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-41-0, T Natarajan 4-0-54-1.

DELHI CAPITALS: Pathum Nissanka lbw b Jadeja 62, KL Rahul c Ferreira b Archer 75, Nitish Rana c Jurel b Deshpande 33, Tristan Stubbs (not out) 18, Ashutosh Sharma (not out) 25. Extras (W-7, B-4, NB-1, LB-1) 13. **TOTAL (for 3 wkts, 19.1 overs) 226.**

Fall of wickets: 1-110, 2-171, 3-177

Bowling: Jofra Archer 4-0-46-1, Nandre Burger 3-0-41-0, Tushar Deshpande 4-0-38-1, Brijesh Sharma 3.1-0-35-0, Ravi Bishnoi 2-0-28-0, Ravindra Jadeja 3-0-33-1.

Result: DC won by 7 wickets.

PoM: KL Rahul.

CSK, MI in battle for survival

Struggling giants have plenty of issues to address

CHENNAI, PTI

Their IPL 2026 campaigns hanging by a thread, Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians face a must-win showdown here on Saturday, with both sides desperate to reverse their inconsistent form and stay afloat in the playoff race.

The two most successful franchises in IPL history have endured a forgettable campaign so far, with neither side able to build sustained momentum.

LIVE 7:30 PM

While CSK have found conditions at the MA Chidambaram Stadium more familiar, their performances have lacked the clinical edge that has defined them over the years.

Their batting has been inconsistent, particularly in the middle overs, while the bowling unit, traditionally their strength at home, has struggled to close out games under pressure.

Mumbai Indians, too, have blown hot and cold this season. Despite flashes of brilliance from their top order, the five-time champions have been let down by a fragile middle order and an underwhelming bowling attack that has failed to defend totals or contain opposition batters at crucial junctures. With the league entering a decisive phase, this contest assumes added significance as both teams look to turn their fortunes.

CSK will hope their spinners can exploit the slow Chepauk surface, while MI will bank on their power hitters to counter the spin threat.

Given their current form, neither side starts as a clear favourite, making this clash a battle of survival rather than dominance in what has traditionally been the IPL's marquee rivalry.

Placed sixth in the points table with three wins from eight matches, the Ruturaj Gaikwad-led CSK are facing playoff uncertainty due to inconsistency, a negative net run rate, and the prolonged absence of MS Dhoni.

Dhoni has been sidelined with a calf strain injury sustained during pre-season training, and despite initial hopes of a faster return, he has missed the first half of the tournament.

New recruit Sanju Samson has been CSK's standout batter, scoring over 300 runs in eight innings, including two swashbuckling hundreds, and he will once again shoulder the responsibility in batting.

With the ball, Jamie Overton and Anshul Kamboj have been impressive for CSK, with the former recording the best bowling figures of the season, taking 4/18 against Delhi Capitals.

Chennai Super Kings' captain Ruturaj Gaikwad will be looking to shed his inconsistent run when they take on Mumbai Indians on Saturday. PTI

POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	NR	Pts	NRR
Punjab Kings	8	6	1	1	13	1.043
Royal Challengers	9	6	3	0	12	1.420
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	6	3	0	12	0.832
Rajasthan Royals	10	6	4	0	12	0.510
Gujarat Titans	9	5	4	0	10	-0.192
Delhi Capitals	9	4	5	0	8	-0.895
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.121
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	2	5	1	5	-0.751
Mumbai Indians	8	2	6	0	4	-0.784
Lucknow Super Giants	8	2	6	0	4	-1.106

Ambrish replaces Mavi

HYDERABAD, PTI: Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday picked RS Ambrish as an injury replacement for Shivam Mavi for the remainder of the Indian Premier League.

All-rounder Ambrish was a part of the triumphant India Under-19 squad at the World Cup earlier this year. He was also India Under-19's joint-highest wicket-taker (11) at the tournament.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Bhuvneshwar Kumar took his fifth three-wicket haul of the season in the game against Gujarat Titans on Thursday. PTI

Bhuvi focussed on team goals than personal glory

AHMEDABAD, PTI

Seasoned Royal Challengers Bengaluru pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar said he has reached a stage in his career where team success takes precedence over individual milestones.

The 36-year-old, who is currently the leading wicket-taker in the tournament, returned figures of 3 for 28, his fifth three-wicket haul of the season, in RCB's four-wicket loss to Gujarat Titans, taking him to the top of the bowling chart.

While the performance earned him the Purple Cap, Bhuvneshwar downplayed its significance, emphasising a shift in priorities that comes with experience.

"It's good that I got the Purple Cap. But I think I have come out of that time where I want to achieve something individually," Bhuvneshwar said at the post-match press conference.

"Of course, I want to achieve something, but now it's more of a team. I'm not young anymore. Of course, when you're young, you want to win those awards, and it comes when you do well. But when you want to work towards the team's goal, and you get an individual award or reward, you feel good. But honestly, I'm just trying my best. Getting confidence from the management. That's all I can say," he added.

Bhuvneshwar acknowledged that chasing has become easier this season across venues. "If you look at this IPL, chasing is a bit easier in any ground because the way wicket behaves and dew comes. So, yes, it could be different. But yeah, we didn't win the toss. We were asked to bat first. We tried our best in bowling. So now the result is that we lost. That's all."

Defending a modest total, Bhuvneshwar said RCB's strategy was to attack and take wickets rather than contain runs. "If you look at the scenario, there was some help for seamers, and we had Romario (Shepherd), third seamer. So, we wanted to take a chance.

"And Suyash (Sharma) is someone who is not easy to pick. So, we wanted to get wickets as quick as possible. So that's the reason he didn't bowl. We couldn't have won the match by defending runs. We could have won by taking wickets, and the bowlers who bowled were the best bowlers to get those wickets," he added.

Unstoppable Sinner reaches final

MADRID, AFP

World No. 1 Jannik Sinner downed Arthur Fils 6-2, 6-4 to reach the Madrid Open final on Friday.

The Italian won his 22nd straight match to book a place in Sunday's final, where he will aim to win a record fifth consecutive Masters 1000 title.

With his chief rival Carlos Alcaraz out injured, Sinner is firm favourite to triumph at the Caja Magica and add to recent titles at Indian Wells, Miami and Monte-Carlo.

The 24-year-old will face second seed Alexander Zverev or promising Belgian Alexander Blockx in the final.

Beating Sinner right now seems a near-impossible feat and the four-time Grand Slam winner started superbly against Barcelona Open winner Fils, who has impressed since returning from injury in February.

The Italian broke in third game when Fils went long to lead 2-1.

Sinner broke again in the fifth game with Fils, ranked 25th in the world, unable to cope with his sheer power.

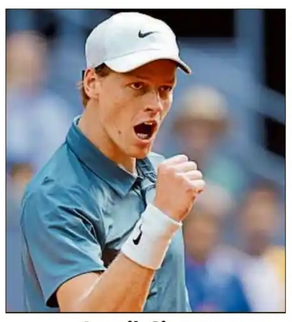
The Frenchman has not yet reached a Masters 1000 final and with Sinner in sumptuous form it quickly became clear he would have to wait a little longer.

Sinner wrapped up the first set on his serve after Fils found some fighting spirit to prevent a third break.

The second set was far closer, with Fils rising in confidence and belief.

The 21-year-old saved two break points for a 3-2 lead, and put pressure on Sinner's next serve, although the Italian produced two aces to hold.

Sinner broke with a down-the-line backhand winner to end an excellent rally for a 5-4 lead and served it out to triumph.



Jannik Sinner

Meanwhile, Andreeva's remarkable clay-court campaign continued with a strong 6-4, 7-6 (10/8) performance against Aryna Sabalenka's conqueror Hailey Baptiste, which sent the Russian into her first Madrid final.

The ninth-seeded Andreeva is 12-1 on clay so far this season, with a title run in Linz, a semi-final showing in Stuttgart and now a final appearance in Madrid, where she awaits Marta Kostyuk.

Andreeva was broken while serving for the match at 5-4 as Baptiste forced a tiebreak and saved three set points before the Russian wrapped up the win in one hour and 39 minutes.

"Honestly, I feel so much adrenaline inside. I feel like I'm still nervous. I'm just so happy that I won and that I was able to save all those set points," said Andreeva, who won 81 percent of her first-serve points.

Nishikori to retire at end of season

Kei Nishikori (in pic), Asia's most decorated men's tennis player, on Friday said that he will retire at the end of the season after a career ravaged by injury, reports AFP from Tokyo.

The 36-year-old became the first Japanese player to reach a Grand Slam final at the 2014 US Open, eventually losing to Croatia's Marin Cilic.

He was the first Japanese man to climb into the top 10 in the ATP world rankings, reaching a career high of number four, and won 12 titles on tour. Nishikori also won bronze in the men's singles at the 2016 Rio Olympics. He has been dogged by injuries for years and said last month that he was "barely hanging on" in terms of his physical fitness.

Spotlight on pole vaulters

BHUBANESWAR, PTI

National record holders Dev Kumar Meena of Madhya Pradesh and Baranica Elangovan of Tamil Nadu will be among the top draws in the inaugural Indian Indoor Open Combined Events and Pole Vault Competition which begins here on Saturday.

The two-day meet is being held at the state-of-the-art Indoor facility at the Kalinga Stadium complex here, which had hosted the inaugural National Indoor Championships in March. The facility is also hosting the World Indoor Championships in 2028.

Meena has had an impressive performance graph this season. In March, he equalled his national record (5.40m) during an invitational meet in Taiwan.

"My goal here in Bhubaneswar is to do my personal best. I enjoyed my practice sessions at Kalinga Stadium Indoor facility. I'm ready to do my best.","-the-20-year-old said.

The men's pole vault qualification criteria set by Athletics Federation of India (AFI) for the 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games is 5.25m. The qualification mark for women is 4.45m.

The men's qualification standard for the Asian Games in Japan later this year is 5.45m, while 4.10m is the corresponding mark for the women. Fourteen pole vaulters will compete in the men's event scheduled for opening day on Saturday. Other prominent competitors in the fray are Kuldeep Kumar from Madhya Pradesh and Reegan G of Tamil Nadu, who has 5.30m and 5.35m efforts this season.

Seven athletes have confirmed their participation in the men's U20 pole vault event. The women's pole vault final will be held on Sunday. Eleven athletes have registered for the event but the main focus will be on Baranica Elangovan who set a new national record of 4.22m during the inaugural National Indoor Championships in March at the same venue.

Pole-vaulter Dev Kumar Meena will be eyeing a strong show at the inagural Indian Indoor Open starting Saturday.

AFI's diktat for skipping Fed Cup

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has announced that any athlete who does not turn up without valid reason after making entry at the National Senior Athletics Federation Cup to be held in Ranchi from May 22-25 could be barred from taking part in the subsequent event.

Over the years, the AFI has been facing the problem of athletes entering their names for their events but not turning up during competitions apparently due to fear that they may be dope-tested by the National Anti-Doping Agency or due to other reasons, leading to very few competing in a particular event.

"If any athlete fails to participate after sending the entry without any valid reason, he/she may not be allowed to take part in any subsequent event. The Federation has the right to reject any entry without assigning any reason," the AFI said in a recent circular regarding the Federation Cup.

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DECCAN HERALD
Saturday, May 2, 2026

Wknd.

ADVERTORIAL & PROMOTIONAL LIFESTYLE FEATURE

TASTE OF MEXICO AT HOME
PAGE 02

LEARNING AT THE CAFE
PAGE 04

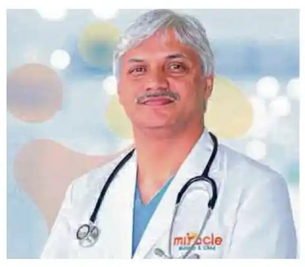
Miracle Women and Children's Hospital in Varthur too

Miracle Women and Children's Hospital, one of Bengaluru's most trusted names in maternal and paediatric healthcare, opened a new branch at Varthur to cater to the needs of residents in this part of the city.

Founded in 2018 by Dr Madhusudhan Naidu and Dr Bala R, two distinguished physicians who spent over two decades practising medicine in the United States, Miracle Hospital was conceived to bring the gold standard of healthcare to every woman and child in Bengaluru. "This is a healing sanctuary where world-class treatment for mothers and children is accessible to all", says Dr Naidu.

The Varthur branch offers advanced medical technology, a hand-picked team of experienced specialists and the hospital's hallmark compassionate environment. Located in one of the city's fastest-growing residential zones, it caters to people here in need of quality healthcare. People living in the localities around will no longer need to fight Bengaluru's notorious traffic for an emergency paediatric consultation or an antenatal check-up. The 'miracle', quite simply, is now around the corner.

The Varthur branch of Miracle Women and Children's Hospital


Dr Madhusudhan Naidu

Dr Bala R

Mission and vision

Miracle Women and Children's Hospital's mission is to work as a 'sanctuary that delivers the miracle of happiness in health to women and children'. This facility has dedicated staff who deliver unparalleled care, earning the hospital its reputation of being one of the most trusted, family-centred institutions in India.

The vision reaches further – 'to be the most patient and staff-friendly hospital dedicated to holistic care of international standards, delivered with empathy and excellence to every woman and child without exception'.

Core values

Miracle Women and Children's Hospital's core values make it a much sought-after facility.

Its values include:

- Patient first always
- Integrity in every action
- Respect for all
- Unmatched satisfaction
- Community first
- Compassion together

Comprehensive specialist services

The Varthur facility offers a comprehensive suite of specialist services, each staffed by physicians whose credentials span India, England and the United States.

The specialities include:

- Gynaecology and Obstetrics
- Maternity and antenatal care
- High-risk pregnancy
- Infertility and reproductive medicine
- Endocrinology
- Laparoscopic and cosmetic gynaecology
- Urogynaecology
- Paediatrics, paediatric HDU
- Neonatology, newborn care
- Paediatric neurology and surgery
- Orthopaedics
- Oncology, Radiology

Miracle Women and Children's Hospital
563, Gunjur Village, Varthur Hobli
Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru 87
Ph: 080 6611 6611, 81473 33059
Email: varthur@miraclehospital.care
Website: www.miraclehospital.care
Also at: 765 Seegahalli Village
Bidarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru 49

Summer hacks

Matcha ice cream

For those who like a slightly earthy, mildly sweet dessert, matcha ice cream is a summer winner. Made with green tea powder, milk and a touch of honey, this Japanese-inspired frozen treat is both refreshing and packed with antioxidants. While tickling your tastebuds, it lowers bad cholesterol, manages blood pressure and promotes heart health.

Rotate plants weekly

Move your potted plants slightly every week so that all sides get equal exposure to sunlight. This prevents plants from leaning or growing unevenly towards one side. Regular rotation also helps you spot hidden pests and signs of decay that might otherwise go unnoticed. Many indoor plants have cooling properties and help keep pests away too.

SkyJumper launches 'Curious Kids'

In this edutainment model, play becomes progress and fun turns into achievement. It's aligned with NEP 2020 and built for educational outings that matter. At this first-of-its-kind edutainment play ecosystem, children don't just play, but learn, compete, create and earn their achievements. "Curious Kids blends physical activity, cognitive challenges, creativity, performance and real-world experiences into one immersive environment, where play becomes purposeful and every interaction drives growth", says Jitender Chabbra, Co-founder, SkyJumper.

Age: 3-13 years
Address: 4th Floor, Orion Avenue Mall
Time: 10 am to 10 pm (Mon-Sun)

Enhance your hearing for quality life

Dr Sathya Ranna, Founder Director, **Shreya Group of Hearing Clinics**, and a pioneer in the field of private hearing aid dispensing with associated rehabilitation services, explains why hearing loss occurs and how it can be mitigated with state-of-the-art hearing aids the clinic offers

Dr Sathya Ranna

Noise cannot be avoided. However, try to minimise the amount of time spent around noise or wear protection. Be aware of damaging noises such as lawn mowers, freeway traffic, airport traffic, subways, pubs, loud movie theatres and overcrowded public areas. If you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone within arm's length, the noise is too loud.

Keep the volume of your iPod or radio at a moderate level. If your work involves loud machinery, always wear protective earplugs or earmuffs. If you live near a busy road and find traffic noise disturbing at night, consider sleeping earplugs.

State-of-the-art technology at Shreya

Shreya Hearing Clinic has branches across Karnataka and Telangana, and helps people overcome hearing loss induced by noise, age-related or other causes. The clinics offer the latest technology with Bluetooth and surround sound, and object-oriented sound systems, to ensure you hear remarkably well even in noisy or complicated situations.

Revolutionary hearing aids

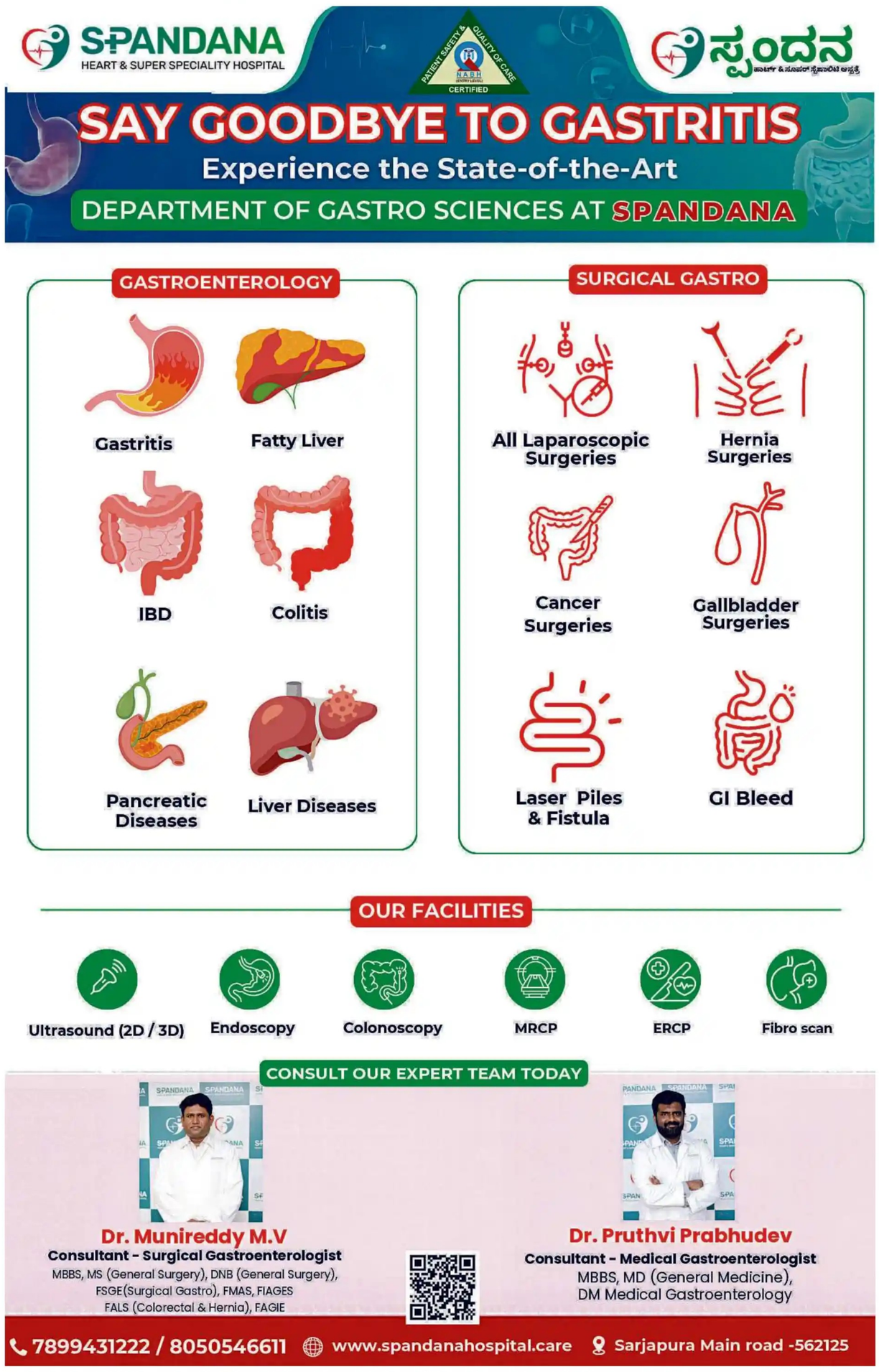
Hearing aids come in many different styles - digital hearing aids, iPhone hearing aids, rechargeable hearing aids. Each device looks and feels different. They come in a number of sizes from the invisible-in-canal to a mini receiver-in-canal.

Shreya Hearing Clinic offers advanced hearing aids which encourage you to follow an active lifestyle. Today, hearing aids are mini-computers for your ears, driven by algorithms and AI base. Shreya Hearing Clinic also offers pioneering hearing aids that monitor the brain and body activity and provide convenient features to simplify your life.

Benefits of hearing aids

- Reduced mental fatigue
- Decreased feeling of isolation and depression
- Improved ability to do several things at once
- Improved memory, attention and focus
- Improved communication skills
- Enjoy life

Shreya Hearing Clinic
Indiranagar: 080 25214746/7/8, 96864 49426 • Sadashivanagar: 080 23618037/8/9, 96864 49382 • Jayanagar: 080 26533055/6/7, 96864 49375/78 • Vijayanagar: 080 23180011/2, 99000 44214 • Koramangala: 080 25634411/2/3, 91085 08916 • Kammanahalli: 080 25455078/9, 96864 49385 • Bannerghatta Road: 080 26486033/4, 96864 49370 • Marathahalli/Bellandur: 080 28441062/3, 96864 49392. Home visit: 99456 33115 • Tollfree: 1800 425 3435



Wknd. DELIGHT

Charring adds a deep, smoky note that instantly elevates the dish

TASTY TWIST

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

YOUR KITCHEN STAPLES WORK

Use what's already in your kitchen. Soft rotis can totally stand in for tortillas and rajma does a pretty good job as black beans. Coriander can be used in place of greens. For fillings? Paneer or mushroom along with shredded lettuce work great. The idea isn't to obsess with authenticity - just catch that vibe.

POP THE FLAVOURS

Pair Mexican food with lime or tomato to make all the flavours pop. Although chillies are commonly used in the cuisine, the dishes are balanced and not just about fiery heat. If you bite into something that feels too heavy or too sharp, squeeze some lemon over it, just like with chaats.

PIC COURTESY: CHINITA REAL MEXICAN FOOD

Deepa Natarajan Lobo gets three chefs to present dishes you can impress your guests with this weekend

Taste of Mexico at home

Bold and colourful, Mexican cuisine is loaded with big flavours and can be quickly created at home with simple techniques and ingredients. From smoky corn tossed with lime and cheese to crisp, cheesy quesadillas, these easy-to-make recipes bring the spirit of Mexico straight to your kitchen - perfect for a relaxed weekend indulgence.

Veg Quesadilla

By chef Candice Lock Mirchandani

"Just keep things simple. The best Mexican dishes stick to a handful of good ingredients. It's easy to get carried away piling on sauces or toppings, but that just makes things messy. A couple of well-chosen flavours make your food taste sharper, cleaner and just way better".

What you need

- Two flour tortillas (available in most supermarkets or make flat maida rotis at home)
- One cup each of mozzarella (grated) and mixed vegetables (mushroom, capsicum, onion, spring onion)
- One tablespoon of jalapenos (chopped)

For seasoning

- One teaspoon of cumin powder
- Half a teaspoon of smoked paprika or chilli powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Butter or oil for cooking
- Optional: Oregano or mixed herbs

Preparation

- Prepare the filling by heating a pan with a little oil. Saute onions, then add capsicum or mushrooms. Add cumin, paprika, salt and pepper. Cook until slightly charred but not mushy. Keep the spices minimal.
- Place the tortilla flat on a plate. Sprinkle cheese evenly (this acts as glue). Add filling to one half and fold into a half-moon.
- Heat a flat tawa over medium heat. Add a little butter or oil. Cook the quesadilla until crispy and golden on the outside and the cheese is fully melted inside. Flip once.
- Serve immediately with sour cream or salsa, or as is.

Mango Guacamole

By corporate chef Dipesh Darjee

"A playful twist on classic guacamole, this one brings in the sweetness of ripe mango to balance the creaminess of avocado. I like to keep it slightly chunky for texture, with just enough lime and chilli to cut through and keep it fresh, bright and full of contrast".

What you need

- Two ripe avocados
- One ripe Alphonso mango (peeled and diced)
- Two tablespoons of red onion (finely chopped)
- One small tomato (deseeded and chopped)
- One green chilli (finely chopped)
- Juice from one lime
- Two tablespoons of fresh coriander (chopped)
- Quarter teaspoon of black pepper powder
- Half a teaspoon of cumin powder
- Salt to taste

Preparation

- Cut the avocados, remove the seed and scoop the flesh into a bowl. Lightly mash, keeping it slightly chunky for texture. Add mango, onion, tomato, green chilli, black pepper and cumin powder. Add lime juice and salt, and mix gently until well-combined. Fold in fresh coriander and give it a final light mix.
- Serve immediately with nachos or tortilla chips.

PIC COURTESY: BROOKS AND BOND

Esquites Mexican Street Corn Salad

By chef Varun Pereira

"I had seen esquites everywhere - online and on TV - and the first time I had it was during my trip to Mexico City. And it just hits - proper street food that's loud on flavour and impossible to stop eating. I'm a complete sucker for corn, so I kept going back to it. It's great on its own, but also works beautifully in rice bowls, tacos or burritos".

PIC COURTESY: COMAL

What you need

- Four cups of corn kernels
- Two tablespoons of neutral oil or butter
- One tablespoon of mayonnaise
- 50 gm each of cream and crumbled queso fresco (or ricotta)
- One small white onion (finely diced)
- Four garlic cloves (minced)
- Two serranos or jalapenos (finely chopped)
- One teaspoon of epazote or coriander stems
- One teaspoon of ancho chilli powder or tajin (available online or in gourmet supermarkets)
- Juice from one lime juice
- Salt to taste

Preparation

- Slice the kernels off the cob and keep aside. Heat a heavy pan until very hot (cast iron works best). Add oil or butter, followed by the corn. Let it sit and blister, picking up colour - you want it nutty and slightly smoky. Push the corn to one side. Add a little more oil or butter if needed, then add onions. Cook until soft, but not browned. Add garlic and chilli. Saute for 30–45 seconds. Add a splash of water and let it simmer briefly. Add epazote or coriander stems and let it simmer for 2–3 minutes to bring everything together.
- Turn off the heat and let the mixture cool slightly. Fold in the cream and a bit of mayonnaise (you can use aioli for a stronger garlic flavour). Add lime juice gradually, tasting as you go.
- Finish with queso fresco and a sprinkle of chilli powder.
- Optional: Garnish with chopped coriander or spring onion and a touch of butter for shine.
- Pro tip: If you can get poblano chillies, just char, chop and mix them in - it elevates the dish completely.

LEISURE

Beetle Bailey

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CIUEJ

DLREE

VIRRED

SBEATK

Today's Guest JUMBLER is
NORM FEUTI
creator of RETAIL
THIS CHEAP LAPTOP BROKE THE FIRST TIME I THREW IT! I WANT MY MONEY BACK!
HERE COMES ANOTHER MIGRAINE.
11-17
THE RETAIL EMPLOYEE'S ON-THE-JOB HEADACHES WERE OFTEN ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @Play-Jumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

"◯◯◯◯" - ◯◯◯◯◯

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Answers

JUICE ELDER DRIVER BASKET

The retail employee's on-the-job headaches were often — "JERK"-RELATED

HITORI-144

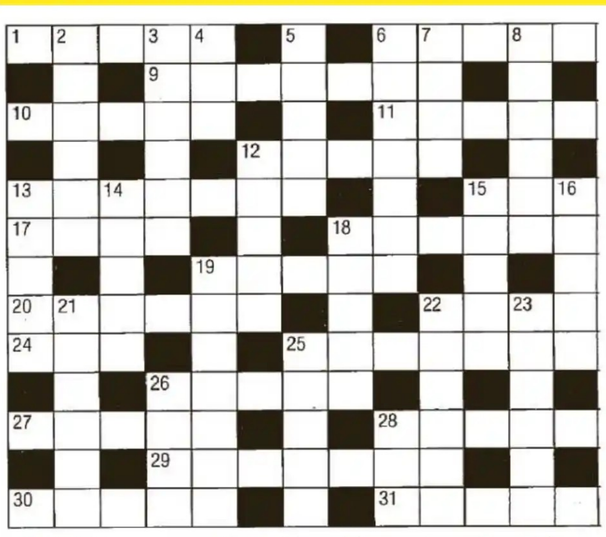
3	2	5	8	4	6	5	7
4	6	1	7	8	5	7	6
6	4	8	3	7	4	5	5
5	8	2	5	3	3	4	1
3	7	5	4	5	5	2	5
5	3	6	5	2	7	5	4
7	4	5	5	1	2	3	8
5	3	7	2	3	3	6	5

SOLUTION for HITORI-144

■	6	3	■	2	7	■	5
8	2	3	1	■	5	4	7
4	■	7	2	5	6	3	■
■	2	5	■	4	■	7	3
1	4	■	3	■	2	8	■
5	■	4	7	3	8	■	6
■	7	■	8	■	1	6	4
7	5	6	4	8	■	2	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 145



CRYPTIC

ACROSS

1 They collect fares, starting tomorrow, on the Central line (5)
6 What to reach for when a spear breaks? (5)
9 It can make one glad, being in Ireland (7)
10 Tempo of the piano in something often broadcast (5)
11 Moves fast in a game (5)
12 Red? Emphatically! (5)
13 How unfeeling it is, to call us out for nothing (7)
15 Has she more than one husband? (3)
17 Pieces of land one reserves (4)
18 One occupying temporary accommodation? (6)
19 What Santa has, to keep a bit warm in bed? (5)
20 Foreigners helping to feed us (6)
22 Lengthy account of a gas explosion (4)
24 That of a sea rover may have a ring in it (3)
25 Most large and silent (7)
26 It transpires that a stew needs stirring (5)
27 Again in the trio (5)
28 They often have a flutter (5)
29 Maybe hot lemon, nothing less, can help when you've a cold (7)
30 You can catch one at the junction when the weather's wet (5)
31 In Bedfordshire, a string perhaps? (5)

DOWN

2 Seem a very quiet listener (6)
3 Is put out of business by scrupulous notions (6)
4 Half sodden piece of turf (3)
5 Computerised lists with which people confront us (5)
6 Put more into the vehicle thus burdened (7)
7 Work can be fun (4)
8 Profit on a ticket? (6)
12 Sure to be confused about a number of laws (5)
13 Rebels have one that's superior, just in case (5)
14 Money always used to apply pressure (5)
15 Is she twice a mother? (5)
16 It arises, of course, in cooking (5)
18 Something nice to handle (5)
19 Where an intermediary goes (7)
21 Used to be that lady's cleaner (6)
22 One has to smile about the likeness (6)
23 Directed by a good Scottish editor (6)
25 He may be about right (5)
26 Only half of the motorway goes to the southeast (4)
28 He's suspended (3)

EASY

ACROSS

1 Healed (5)
6 Sharp (5)
9 Female voice (7)
10 Hackneyed (5)
11 Sewer (5)
12 Get on (5)
13 Flap (7)
15 Wager (3)
17 Otherwise (4)
18 Corsair (6)
19 Flowing (5)
20 Dull (6)
22 Sin (4)
24 Knight's title (3)
25 Small boat (7)
26 Outrider (5)
27 Dot (5)
28 Shinbone (5)
29 Listening carefully (3,4)
30 Category (5)
31 Raising agent (5)

DOWN

2 Unfurl (6)
3 Property (6)
4 Female deer (3)
5 Previous (5)
6 Type of robot (7)
7 Stout string (4)
8 Lavatory (6)
12 Abdomen (5)
13 Gives food to (5)
14 Escort (5)
15 Fundamental (5)
16 Native American tent (5)
18 Flier (5)
19 Lentigo (7)
21 Slight wave (6)
22 Travelling case (6)
23 Alleges (6)
25 Blocks (5)
26 Wound mark (4)
28 Attempt (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 145

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, T-axis 6, spare 9, Donegal 10, S-p-eed 11, Darts 12, Ruddy 13, Call-O-us 15, Mrs 17, A-res. 18, Ten-an-t 19, Be-ar-d 20, Swedes 22, Saga 24, Ear 25, Maxi-mum 26, Sweat 27, Th-re-e 28, Birds 29, Menthol 30, T-rain 31, Be-a-ds.
DOWN: 2, A-pp-ear 3, I-deal-s 4, Sod 5, Men-us 6, S-add-led 7, Play 8, Return 12, Ru-l-es 13, Ca-U-se 14, L-ever 15, Ma-dam 16, Steam 18, Treat 19, Between 21, Was-her 22, S-l-mile 23, Guid-ed. 25, Ma-Rt.-y 26, SE-MI 28, Bob.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Cured 6, Acute 9, Soprano 10, Trite 11, Drain 12, Board 13, Flutter 15, Bet 17, Else 18, Pirate 19, Fluid 20, Dreary 22, Vice 24, Sir 25, Coracle 26, Scout 27, Speck 28, Tilia 29, All ears 30, Genre 31, Yeast.
DOWN: 2, Unroll 3, Estate 4, Doe 5, Prior 6, Android 7, Cord 8, Toilet 12, Belly 13, Feeds 14, Usher 15, Basic 16, Tepee 18, Pilot 19, Freckle 21, Ripple 22, Valise 23, Claims 25, Cubes 26, Scar 28, Try.

DH DECCAN HERALD

Wknd. STYLE

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

SIPS WITH A TWIST

The summer calls for more hydration than usual. You need to keep sipping water through the day to stay adequately hydrated. Just infuse your water with veggies and herbs to get more out of it – nutrition, hydration and taste.

Avoid infusing your drinking water with artificial ingredients and sugar

SMART SIP

ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

Infusing your water with veggies and herbs gives your daily nutrition consumption a boost. The flavour apart, you get more vitamins and antioxidants. The water you drink daily will also promote your skin health and give your immune system a push up.

Smart response to harsh summer

The enduring saree is a perfect mix of climate sensitivity, tradition and elegance, writes **Prasad Bidapa**

Designer: Aafreen Banu
Model: Arshdeep Kaur

Designer: Anil Hosamani
Model: Prita Singh

Designer: Pavithra Muddaya, Vimor
Model: Anjali Khandal

Designer: Rta Kapur Chishti
Model: Daman Brar

When the Indian summer rises to its unforgiving peak, fashion must respond not with excess, but with intelligence. The saree - our most enduring garment - offers precisely that, a perfect confluence of climate sensitivity, craft heritage and understated elegance. My top selections this season are not merely aesthetic choices - they are deeply functional, rooted in India's extraordinary handloom legacy.

From Karnataka, the Ilkal saree stands out for its distinctive construction, particularly the joined silk pallu that lends both structure and visual drama. It is robust, yet breathable, ideal for long summer days. Equally compelling is the Kota Doria saree from Rajasthan - a silk-cotton marvel known for its airy weave. Its translucent texture allows for dressier interpretations without compromising comfort.

Rajasthan appears again with the timeless charm of Indigo block-printed saree. Dyed using natural indigo, these sarees are not only visually striking but also possess cooling properties -an often overlooked benefit of vegetable dyes, which interact gently with the skin in extreme heat.

Fashion Notes

From Madhya Pradesh, the Maheshwari saree offers a refined balance of silk and cotton, creating a fabric that breathes while retaining a subtle sheen. West Bengal's Gamcha saree, with its roots in utilitarian cloth, has been reinterpreted into a contemporary saree that is light, absorbent and effortlessly stylish.

The Venkatagiri saree from Andhra Pradesh is another summer essential - fine, soft and almost weightless. Tamil Nadu's cotton Kancheepuram saree offers a quieter, more breathable alternative to its heavier silk counterpart, retaining the grandeur while adapting to the climate.

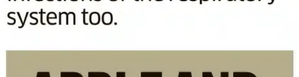
From Goa, the simplicity of the Kunbi saree is refreshing - its coarse cotton structure allows maximum airflow, making it one of the most climate-appropriate textiles. Finally, the cotton Ikat saree from Odisha, with its intricate resist-dye patterns, combines visual richness with breathable comfort.

What unites these selections is a commitment to cotton, to handwoven integrity and to the intelligence of indigenous techniques. In an age of synthetic excess, these sarees remind us that true luxury lies in comfort, sustainability and cultural continuity. Vegetable dyes, hand-spun yarns and breathable weaves are not just design choices - they are time-tested responses to our environment. This summer, dressing well is not about layering more - it is about choosing wisely. And India, with its vast textile heritage, offers us the perfect wardrobe to do just that.

Photographer: Jiten Agarwal
Event: Vastra Veda / National Handlooom Day

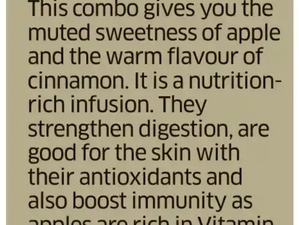
Summer Coolers

Lemon and mint



This is a combination that adds a tangy taste to the water and gives you the Vitamin C you need this season. It helps you boost your immune system to fight the common summer infections that do the rounds. It is a refreshing drink and especially good if you are outdoors in peak heat. Ideally, use a fresh-cut lemon and ensure the mint leaves are fresh too.

Strawberry and Tulasi



This is the season for strawberry. Both strawberry and Tulasi have their health benefits as they are nutrient-dense. This infusion helps regulate blood sugar levels and is good for you skin health. It also boosts your immune system. It helps fight infections of the respiratory system too.

APPLE AND CINNAMON

This combo gives you the muted sweetness of apple and the warm flavour of cinnamon. It is a nutrition-rich infusion. They strengthen digestion, are good for the skin with their antioxidants and also boost immunity as apples are rich in Vitamin C. This is also a good option to mute those mid-day cravings for something sweet.

WATERMELON AND MINT

This infusion makes for a light and hydrating drink. It is sure to tickle your tastebuds with the sweetness of watermelon. Ideal for summer, this infusion helps your immune system fight infections and gives you the nutrition boost you need in this season.

Pineapple and coconut water

This in-season fruit is known to aid digestion, reduce inflammation and boost immunity. It is also good for the skin. Coconut water gives you the electrolytes you need in this season naturally. Though this infusion is a bit elaborate, it serves you well especially if you are exposed to the harsh sun outdoors.

TLC for tresses

Shilpi Madan has some tips to help you get your summer hair care routine right

Summer Care

The summer sun could be making your locks spin in a nasty tangle of sweaty grime with the dust and daily commute taking over. Cue into what works in follicular care and make sure your hair stays haute even when it gets hot.

Iron up
Keep a check on your haemoglobin and Vitamin D levels. The blood carrier to the follicles needs a healthy boost with a daily intake of spinach, amla, beetroot, mango, papaya and more. Eat iron rich foods or else hair fall is a common concern that sets in the moment your diet dips in iron intake. Make space of inclusions such as halim seeds in your diet too for folic acid.

Pulse it
Legumes and pulses are superb for shiny, voluminous locks. Eat black-eyed peas, bring in the dals with tadka and up the protein and carbohydrate intake in the right amounts to keep your hair's health index strong. Remember, there is a reason why rice water is still a vital ingredient in Japanese beauty care. Editing carbohydrates in yo-yo diets inflicts severe punishment on your follicles.

Stay clean
Scalp is the new skin. Ensure it stays bereft of sweat, dirt and grime as they block the pores. Desist from combing wet hair, skip leave-in conditioners and products, and refrain from frying your locks with heat-induced treatments using hair irons, dryers and tongs. Allow your tresses to dry naturally. A gentle roots massage on the scalp with warm coconut oil is a good idea, once a week. Avoid applying oil and leaving it overnight. A 30-minute rest in the scalp works well.

Airport fashion is more about arriving in shape and less about 'making an entrance' in the summer months. **Jayanthi Madhukar** looks at the trend

Comfort with style for the runway

Plane Ready

Air travel in summer is less about glamour than endurance. Long security lines, crowded terminals and the slow churn of baggage carousels test even the most seasoned flyer, all under a haze of heat and fatigue. As more people travel by air, there is a certain curiosity around dressing up for the travel. It used to be glamourous to travel by air in the last Century. Today, it is about gearing up for the long haul of being herded through lines and being seated in narrow seats with little legroom.

Naturally, the element of fashion and style is getting to be a lesser priority over comfort. Sweatpants are 'normal' travel wear for airports. Fashion stylist Stuttee Mitra says, "The way we dress to fly suggests what we expect of the travel. Yet, there is nothing worse than disembarking from a plane, waiting for your bags at the luggage carousel and running into someone you know while looking unkempt and sloppy".

To avoid such situations, Mitra's solution is don't abandon comfort, but refine it. She gravitates toward pieces that feel like loungewear but hold their shape, like wide-legged trousers in soft fabrics that resist creasing, paired with sleeveless tops that wick away sweat. Her palette stays neutral, with black or navy trousers and a comfortable white top. Footwear, she insists, must be practical. "A good pair of moccasins looks smart and slips off easily at security," she says.

For Rohini Kumar, an IT professional, airport fashion during summer is a challenge. "Usually, I go to work directly from the airport, so my clothes should look unruffled," she says. "Yet, I can't wear pantsuits or anything very formal because of the heat." Her workaround is a pair of tailored black trousers in a polyester-viscose blend that drapes well and resists wrinkles, paired with a lightweight printed top, preferably in rayon. She often carries a spare cotton or linen shirt to change into before a meeting. "It's about being prepared," she says.

For Alisha Prasad, a mother of two toddlers, dressing up for the airport has to be more functional. "I usually prefer athleisure wear because they are comfortable and look quite stylish. I wear the leggings and a well-fitted top. Accessories such as a smart cap, stylish backpack and cool-looking shoes make the outfit look great. For me, this is a good way to present fashion and comfort together", she says.

Airport style today is less about making an entrance and more about arriving intact. The best outfits anticipate the journey with light fabrics, easy silhouettes and minimal fuss. Style and comfort are no longer opposing forces, but quiet collaborators which is the demand for this summer.

Get set for the flight

- Choose clothes that are wrinkle-free and machine-washable
- Cargo pants in soft material are a good idea as they are loose and have elasticated waist If you opt for a sleeveless top, it's a good idea to carry a light jacket as the plane can be cold inside. A scarf will do too
- Wear efficient clothes - elasticated pants are great at security as there is no additional task of removing your belt
- Comfortable slip-ons mean easy footwear removal at the security and if you want, during the flight too
- Good quality cotton socks enhance comfort

DH DECCAN HERALD
Wknd. SUMMER

Watermelon, with its high water content, is a great fruit to use for a cool, refreshing and nutritious juice. Drink it chilled and avoid adding sugar

COOL ITV

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

SPICE IT UP

A sweet and soft fruit, watermelon goes well with some spice too. Give your watermelon salad a twist – add some chilli flakes and very finely-cut pieces of green chillies that are moderately spicy. You can add a pinch of salt too to make up for what's lost in perspiration if you are outdoors for long. However, don't go over-board with this.

JUST CHILL

Watermelon tastes great when chilled. It also is a refreshing fruit to have on a hot afternoon. Watermelon and chickpeas make a wholesome snack that is both filling and nutritious. You can add almonds, pistas or cashewnuts for a crunchy touch. Garnish with coriander and mint. Avoid adding sugar.

Informal, interactive and easy-going 'lectures' at coffee shops, advertised on the social media, are drawing a large number of youngsters. **Swatee Jog digs deep** to find out what's fuelling the trend

Learning at the cafe

Trend Talk

On a warm Friday evening, this cafe in Bengaluru receives a steady stream of people, mostly young, with their tablets or bags in hand. The softly-lit cafe soon fills with a heady smell of fresh brew and a clattering of mocktails. The event is announced on an Instagram page and registrations are done over a Google form. The followers include students, designers, founders, freelancers who register and come sit around a speaker, listening intently.

This isn't a workshop. It's not a lecture hall either. It's something in between. It's a coming together of curious minds in cafes to listen to someone speak, over coffee. A growing trend where people pay for a seat at a cafe to spend 40–60 minutes listening to a subject expert talk, followed by an open, honest conversation. And, the youth are showing up in large numbers.

No networking or scrolling. Just sharing

In a world of reels, swipe culture and shrinking attention spans, this feels surprisingly real. You pay Rs 200 to Rs 500 and get coffee or a soft drink. And more importantly, you get undivided access to someone who has thought deeply or done some great work about something.

Ideas, thoughts, deep work, risks, mistakes, flourishes, secret codes, stories... just about anything. One day it's about a bird watcher speaking about how birds build nests. Someday it is about a techie who shares secrets to winning at board games. At another jam-packed session, a speaker talks on connections between Upanishads and modern science.

"I come here because it's the only space where I don't feel rushed to react," says Aishwarya Hiremath, a 22-year-old psychology student. "You don't know what you're going to learn today. You just sit, listen and let thoughts settle. I find myself thinking long after it's over. That's rare now."

Topics galore

The topics are as diverse as the audience. One evening could be about building a start-up, one about baking from scratch. Another could dive into relationships, mental health or even something as niche as urban biodiversity.

The format is simple - 40 minutes of a speaker sharing insights, stories or failures, and then 20–30 minutes of questions, disagreements, reflections, followed by networking and more coffee. Just conversations that flow freely, unhinged and unburdened by walls, age or experience.

It's about experiences

Rohit Kulkarni, a 45-year-old speaker who recently led a session on 'Failure in your 20s', believes this format works because it strips away pretence. "Young people today are overloaded with facts and information but starved of perspective," he says. "They don't want gyaan. They want honesty - what worked, what didn't, what you did to make amends, something nobody tells you as it is".

And honesty is exactly what they get. It's not a polished script or motivational cliches. Just real people talking about real journeys.

Why youth go for it

Young people are no longer impressed by just success, they're curious about the process. They want a story, context, depth and real conversations. "I attend at least two sessions a month," says Karthik Bhuvan, a 25-year-old content creator. "You can watch a YouTube video anytime. But here, you can interrupt, question and even disagree".

Another attendee, Sana, adds to what Karthik says. "It's not awkward like networking events. You're not trying to impress anyone. You're just present."

Cafe as classroom

What makes this trend interesting is the setting. Unlike auditoriums that create a distance, cafes have a natural easy-going vibe. The seating is close to each other and the speaker is standing at an arm's length. Easily approachable. That changes the dynamics completely.

The speaker is not 'above' you. They're just a few years ahead, sharing what they've learnt. And maybe that's why it works.

Need more than trend

It fills the gap between superficial content, transactional networking and a constant chatter online. Young people are actively seeking spaces where they can slow down, be themselves, be heard and engage with everything without sounding like a performance.

As Samantha, an attendee put it while finishing her coffee, "It feels like we're building our own version of learning. Not because we have to. But because we want to".

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Me Time

A break from the routine weekend gives you the reset to bounce back strong for the week ahead. **Shilpi Madan** has some ideas

Give yourself a summer reset

Tired of the mall-movie routine? Cue into different ways to energise your weekends. A complete break helps you wrestle with work the following week on a new tangent.

Staycation alert

Book yourself into a cool property in or out of town for a refreshing break. Indulge in all the amenities from the spa to pickleball courts to make the most of your time. Try the treks and Nature trails to follow the birds and butterflies.

Sign up

Dip into a new activity like a dancing session or latte art. Creating your own fragrance at a pop up, catching a movie at a drive-in, flexing your limbs at an aerial yoga class or spinning on a yacht. Try something new and different.

Refresh, reset

Self-care works beautifully when it comes to realigning your thoughts and glow-quotient. Go for a session in face yoga, try out an early morning routine like moving ice globules across your face or walking barefoot on grass for a rooting movement. It lends a new spin to your day. Nothing succeeds like a mug of Bacha coffee, or an edgy flavour in a seltzer or scoop of ice cream.

Plan out

If you can't take off for the weekend anywhere, map out your next vacation and set the goals for yourself in terms of time and finances. It instantly puts you in a good mood and takes you across the world in seconds. Work out the mechanics of the travel in deep detail to get the momentum in place.

Get sporty

Pick up a new language or a new sport. It gets the happy hormones going. Sign up for pickle ball or squash, dip into aqua yoga or Muay Thai or Krav Maga to sharpen your hand combat moves. Optionally, cycle off from the urban humdrum to smell the flowers and hear the bees.

Make a change

Get a new haircut or make time for your nails at the salon. A head massage, a wine pedi and mani works beautifully. Invest the time in your appearance, you are your best endorsement.

If it rains...

- Binge watch comfort movies at home with plenty of finger foods. Don't let your diet regimen play spoilt-sport – order in all those deep-fried stuff you long for. One day's cheating on your diet won't make a difference.
- Spend some quality me-time. Curl up with a book for a good read. There's nothing like a stream of hot tea through the day. Sit by the window and listen to the rain.
- It's an opportunity to try your hand at some delights in the kitchen – bake a cake or cook up an exotic dish. Who knows, you may discover hidden talent.
- If you are feeling adventurous, get into a raincoat and go around the neighbourhood clicking photos of the rain beating down.

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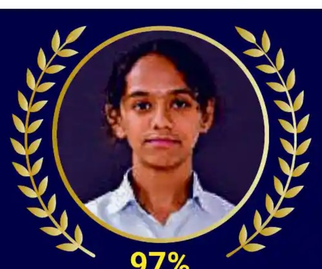
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I, KALPANA Udaykumar, R/o #616, 11th Cross, 7th Block West, Jayanagar, Bangalore-70 State that KALPANA UDAYKUMAR, Dr. KALPANA N. DHANANJAY, & KALPANA DHANANJAY All the above three names refer to me only vide affidavit dated 24-4-2026 before Notary Sumithra. N

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